Benjamin Russell

Woodbury

AN

ABRIDGMENT

Pres. B. Taylor

OF

LECTURES

ON

RHETORIC.

BY HUGH BLAIR, D. D.

REVISED AND CORRECTED.

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Advertiſement.

THE want of a ſyſtem of Rhetoric upon a conciſe plan, and at an eaſy price will, it is preſumed, render this little volume acceptable to the public. To collect knowledge, which is ſcattered over a wide extent, into a ſmall compaſs, if it has not the merit of originality, has at leaſt the advantage of being uſeful. Many, who are terrified at the idea of travelling over a ponderous volume in ſearch of information, will yet ſet out on a ſhort journey in purſuit of ſcience with alacrity and profit. Thoſe for whom the following Eſſays are principally intended, will derive peculiar benefit from the brevity, with which they are conveyed. To youth, who are engaged in the rudiments of learning; whoſe time and attention muſt be occupied by a variety of ſubjects, every branch of ſcience ſhould be rendered as conciſe as poſſible. Hence the attention is not fatigued, nor the memory overloaded.

That a knowledge of Rhetoric forms a very material part of the education of a polite ſcholar muſt be univerſally allowed. Any attempt therefore, however imperfect, to make ſo uſeful an art more generally known, has claim to that praiſe which is the reward of good intention. With this, the Editor will be ſufficiently ſatisfied; ſince being ſerviceable to others is the moſt agreeable method of becoming contented with ourſelves.

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INTRODUCTION.

A PROPER acquaintance with the circle of Liberal Arts is requiſite to the ſtudy of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres. To extend the knowledge of them muſt be the firſt care of thoſe, who wiſh either to write with reputation, or ſo to expreſs themſelves in public, as to command attention. Among the ancients it was an eſſential principle, that the orator ought to be converſant in every department of learning. No art indeed can be contrived, which can ſtamp merit on a compoſition, rich or ſplendid in expreſſion, but barren or erroneous in ſentiment. Oratory, it is true, has often been diſgraced by attempts to eſtabliſh a falſe criterion of its value. Writers have endeavoured to ſupply want of matter by graces of compoſition; and courted the temporary applauſe of the ignorant, inſtead of the laſting approbation of the diſcerning. But ſuch impoſture muſt be ſhort and tranſitory. The body and ſubſtance of any valuable compoſition muſt be formed of knowledge and ſcience. Rhetoric completes the ſtructure, and adds the poliſh; but firm and ſolid bodies only are able to receive it.

Among the learned it has long been a conteſted, and remains ſtill an undecided queſtion, whether Nature or Art contribute moſt toward excellence in writing and diſcourſe. Various may be the opinions with reſpect to the manner, in which Art can moſt effectually furniſh aid for ſuch a purpoſe; and it were preſumption to aſſert, that rhetorical rules, how juſt ſoever, are ſufficient to form an orator. Private application and ſtudy, ſuppoſing natural genius to be favourable, are certainly ſuperior to any ſyſtem of public inſtruction. But, though rules and inſtructions cannot effect every thing which is requiſite, they may be of conſiderable uſe. If they cannot inſpire genius, they can give it direction and aſſiſtance. If they cannot make barrenneſs fruitful, they can correct redundancy. They preſent proper models for imitation; they point out the principal beauties which ought to be ſtudied, and the chief faults which ought to be avoided; and conſequently tend to enlighten Taſte, and to conduct Genius from unnatural deviations into its proper channel. Though they are incapable of producing great excellencies; they may at leaſt ſerve to prevent conſiderable miſtakes.

In the education of youth, no object has appeared more important to wiſe men in every age, than to excite in them an early reliſh for the

entertainments of Taſte. From theſe to the diſcharge of the higher and more important duties of life the tranſition is natural and eaſy. Of thoſe minds, which have this elegant and liberal turn, the moſt pleaſing hopes may be entertained. On the contrary, entire inſenſibility to eloquence, poetry, or any of the fine arts, may juſtly be conſidered as a bad ſymptom in youth; and ſuppoſes them inclined to low gratifications, or capable of being engaged only in the common purſuits of life.

Improvement of Taſte ſeems to be more or leſs connected with every good and virtuous diſpoſition. By giving frequent exerciſe to the tender and humane paſſions, a cultivated taſte increaſes ſenſibility; yet at the ſame time it tends to ſoften the more violent and angry emotions.

Ingenuas didiciſſe fideliter artes
Emollit mores, nec ſinit eſſe feros.

Theſe poliſh'd arts have humaniz'd mankind,
Soften'd the rude, and calm'd the boiſterous mind.

Poetry, Eloquence and Hiſtory continually exhibit to our view thoſe elevated ſentiments and high examples, which tend to nouriſh in our minds public ſpirit, love of glory, contempt of external fortune, and admiration of every thing truly great, noble, and illuſtrious.

TASTE.

TASTE is "the power of receiving pleaſure "or pain from the beauties or deformities of Nature "and of Art." It is a faculty common in ſome degree to all men. Through the circle of human nature, nothing is more general, than the reliſh of Beauty of one kind or other; of what is orderly, proportioned, grand, harmonious, new, or ſprightly. Nor does there prevail leſs generally a diſreliſh of whatever is groſs, diſproportioned, diſorderly, and diſcordant. In children the rudiments of Taſte appear very early in a thouſand inſtances; in their partiality for regular bodies, their fondneſs for pictures and ſtatues, and their warm attachment to whatever is new or aſtoniſhing. The moſt ſtupid peaſants receive pleaſure from tales and ballads, and are delighted with the beautiful appearances of nature in the earth and heavens. Even in the deſerts of America, where human nature appears in its moſt uncultivated ſtate, the ſavages have their ornaments of dreſs, their war and their death ſongs, their harangues and their orators. The principles of Taſte muſt therefore be deeply founded in the human mind. To have ſome diſcernment of Beauty is no leſs eſſential to man, than to poſſeſs the attributes of ſpeech and reaſon.

Though no human being can be entirely devoid of this faculty, yet it is poſſeſſed in very different degrees. In ſome men only faint glimmerings of Taſte are viſible; the beauties, which they reliſh are of the coarſeſt kind; and of theſe they have only a weak and confuſed impreſſion; while in others Taſte riſes to an acute diſcernment, and a lively enjoyment of the moſt refined beauties.

This inequality of Taſte among men is to be aſcribed undoubtedly in part to the different frame of their natures; to nicer organs, and more delicate internal powers, with which ſome are endued beyond others; yet it is owing ſtill more to culture and education. Taſte is certainly one of the moſt improveable faculties of our nature. We may eaſily be convinced of the truth of this aſſertion by only reflecting on that immenſe ſuperiority, which education and improvement give to civilized above barbarous nations in refinement of Taſte; and on the advantage, which they give in the ſame nation to thoſe, who have ſtudied the liberal arts, above the rude and illiterate vulgar.

Reaſon and good ſenſe have ſo extenſive an influence on all the operations and deciſions of Taſte, that a completely good Taſte may well be conſidered, as a power compounded of natural ſenſibility to beauty and of improved underſtanding. To be ſatisfied of this, we may obſerve, that the greater part of the productions of Genius are no other than imitations of nature; repreſentations of the characters, actions, or manners of men. Now the pleaſure we experience from ſuch imitations or repreſentations is founded on mere Taſte; but to judge, whether they be proper-

ly executed, belongs to the understanding, which compares the copy with the original.

In reading, for instance, the Æneid of Virgil a great part of our pleasure arises from the proper conduct of the plan or story; from all the parts being joined together with probability and due connexion; from the adoption of the characters from nature, the correspondence of the sentiments to the characters, and of the style to the sentiments. The pleasure, which is derived from a poem so conducted, is felt or enjoyed by Taste, as an internal sense; but the discovery of this conduct in the poem is owing to reason; and the more reason enables us to discover such propriety in the conduct, the greater will be our pleasure.

The constituents of Taste, when brought to its most perfect state, are two, Delicacy and Correctness.

Delicacy of Taste refers principally to the perfection of that natural sensibility, on which Taste is founded. It implies those finer organs or powers, which enable us to discover beauties, that are concealed from a vulgar eye. It is judged of by the same marks, that we employ in judging of the delicacy of an external sense. As the goodness of the palate is not tried by strong flavours, but by a mixture of ingredients, where, notwithstanding the confusion, we remain sensible of each; so delicacy of internal Taste appears by a quick and lively sensibility to its finest, most compounded, or most latent objects.

Correctness of Taste respects the improvement this faculty receives through its connexion with the understanding. A man of correct Taste is one, who is never imposed on by counterfeit beauties; who carries always in his own mind that standard of good sense,

which he employs in judging of every thing. He eſtimates with propriety the relative merit of the ſeveral beauties, which he meets in any work of genius; refers them to their proper claſſes; aſſigns the principles as far as they can be traced, whence their power of pleaſing is derived; and is pleaſed himſelf preciſely in that degree, in which he ought, and no more.

Taſte is certainly not an arbitrary principle, which is ſubject to the fancy of every individual, and which admits no criterion for determining, whether it be true or falſe. Its foundation is the ſame in every human mind. It is built upon ſentiments and perceptions, which are inſeparable from our nature; and which generally operate with the ſame uniformity, as our other intellectual principles. When theſe ſentiments are perverted by ignorance or prejudice, they may be rectified by reaſon. Their ſound and natural ſtate is finally determined by comparing them with the general Taſte of mankind. Let men declaim as much as they pleaſe, concerning the caprice and uncertainty of Taſte; it is found by experience, that there are beauties, which if diſplayed in a proper light, have power to command laſting and univerſal admiration. In every compoſition, what intereſts the imagination, and touches the heart, gives pleaſure to all ages and nations. There is a certain ſtring, which being properly ſtruck, the human heart is ſo made, as to accord to it.

Hence the univerſal teſtimony, which the moſt improved nations of the earth through a long ſeries of ages have concurred to beſtow on ſome few works of genius; ſuch as the Iliad of Homer, and the Æneid of Virgil. Hence the authority, which ſuch works

have obtained, as ſtandards of poetical compoſition; ſince by them we are enabled to collect, what the ſenſe of mankind is with reſpect to thoſe beauties, which give them the higheſt pleaſure, and which therefore poetry ought to exhibit. Authority or prejudice may in one age or country give a ſhort-lived reputation to an indifferent poet, or a bad artiſt; but, when foreigners, or poſterity examine his works, his faults are diſcovered, and the genuine Taſte of human nature is ſeen. Time overthrows the illuſions of opinion, but eſtabliſhes the deciſions of nature.

CRITICISM. GENIUS. PLEASURES OF TASTE. SUBLIMITY IN OBJECTS.

TRUE CRITICISM is the application of Taſte and of good ſenſe to the ſeveral fine arts. Its deſign is to diſtinguiſh, what is beautiful and what is faulty in every performance. From particular inſtances it aſcends to general principles; and gradually forms rules or concluſions concerning the ſeveral kinds of Beauty in works of Genius.

Criticiſm is an art, founded entirely on experience; on the obſervation of ſuch beauties, as have been found to pleaſe mankind moſt generally. For example, Ariſtotle's rules concerning the unity of action in dramatic and epic compoſition were not firſt diſcovered by logical reaſoning, and then applied to poetry; but they were deduced from the practice of Homer and Sophocles. They were founded upon ob-

ſerving the ſuperior pleaſure, which we derive from the relation of an action, which is one and entire, beyond what we receive from the relation of ſcattered and unconnected facts.

A ſuperior Genius indeed will of himſelf, uninſtructed, compoſe in ſuch manner, as is agreeable to the moſt important rules of Criticiſm; for, as theſe rules are founded in nature, nature will frequently ſuggeſt them in practice. Homer was acquainted with no ſyſtem of the art of poetry. Guided by Genius alone, he compoſed in verſe a regular ſtory, which all ſucceeding ages have admired. This however is no argument againſt the uſefulneſs of Criticiſm. For ſince no human genius is perfect, there is no writer, who may not receive aſſiſtance from critical obſervations upon the beauties and faults of theſe, who have gone before him. No rules indeed can ſupply the defects of genius, or inſpire it, where it is wanting; but they may often guide it into its proper channel; they may correct its extravagancies, and teach it the moſt juſt and proper imitation of nature. Critical rules are intended chiefly to point out the faults, which ought to be avoided. We muſt be indebted to nature for the production of eminent beauties.

GENIUS is a word, which in common acceptation extends much farther, than to objects of Taſte. It ſignifies that talent or aptitude, which we receive from nature, in order to excel in any one thing whatever. A man is ſaid to have a genius for mathematics as well as a genius for poetry; a genius for war, for politics, or for any mechanical employment.

Genius may be greatly improved by art and ſtudy; but by them alone it cannot be acquired. As it is a higher faculty than Taſte, it is ever, according to the common frugality of nature, more limited in the ſphere of its operations. There are perſons, not unfrequently to be met, who have an excellent Taſte in ſeveral of the polite arts; ſuch, as muſic, poetry, painting, and eloquence; but an excellent performer in all theſe arts is very ſeldom found; or rather is not to be looked for. A univerſal Genius, or one who is equally and indifferently inclined toward ſeveral different profeſſions and arts, is not likely to excel in any. Although there may be ſome few exceptions, yet in general it is true, that, when the mind is wholly directed toward ſome one object excluſively of others, there is the faireſt proſpect of eminence in that, whatever it may be. Extreme heat can be produced, only when the rays converge to a ſingle point. Young perſons are highly intereſted in this remark; ſince it may teach them to examine with care, and to purſue with ardour that path, which nature has marked out for their peculiar exertions.

The nature of Taſte, the nature and importance of Criticiſm, and the diſtinction between Taſte and Genius, being thus explained; the ſources of the Pleaſures of Taſte ſhall next be conſidered. Here a very extenſive field is opened; no leſs, than all the Pleaſures of the Imagination, as they are generally called, whether afforded us by natural objects, or by imitations and deſcriptions of them. It is not however neceſſary to the purpoſe of the preſent work, that all theſe be examined fully; the pleaſure, which we receive from diſcourſe or writing, being the principal

object of them. Our design is to give some opening into the Pleasures of Taste in general, and to insist more particularly upon Sublimity and Beauty.

We are far from having yet attained any system concerning this subject. A regular inquiry into it was first attempted by Mr. Addison in his Essay on the Pleasures of the Imagination. By him these Pleasures are ranged under three heads, Beauty, Grandeur, and Novelty. His speculations on this subject, if not remarkably profound, are very beautiful and entertaining; and he has the merit of having discovered a track, which was before untrodden. Since his time the advances, made in this part of philosophical criticism, are not considerable; which is owing doubtless to that thinness and subtilty, which are discovered to be properties of all the feelings of Taste. It is difficult to enumerate the several objects, which give pleasure to Taste; it is more difficult to define all those, which have been discovered, and to range them in proper classes; and, when we would proceed farther, and investigate the efficient causes of the pleasure, which we receive from such objects, here we find ourselves at the greatest loss. For example, we all learn by experience that some figures of bodies appear more beautiful than others; on farther inquiry we discover that the regularity of some figures and the graceful variety of others are the foundation of the beauty, which we discern in them; but, when we endeavour to go a step beyond this, and inquire, why regularity and variety produce in our minds the sensation of beauty; any reason, we can assign, is extremely imperfect. Those first principles of internal sensation nature appears to have studiously concealed.

It is some consolation, however, that, although the efficient cause is obscure, the final cause of those sensations lies commonly more open; and here we must observe the strong impression, which the powers of Taste and Imagination are calculated to give us of the benevolence of our Creator. By these powers he hath widely enlarged the sphere of the pleasures of human life; and those too of a kind the most pure and innocent. The necessary purposes of life might have been answered, though our senses of seeing and hearing had only served to distinguish external objects, without giving us any of those refined and delicate sensations of beauty and grandeur, with which we are now so much delighted.

The pleasure, which arises from sublimity or grandeur, deserves to be fully considered; because it has a character more precise and distinctly marked, than any other of the pleasures of the imagination, and because it coincides more directly with our main subject. The simplest form of external grandeur is seen in the vast and boundless prospects, presented to us by nature; such as widely extended plains, of which the eye can find no limits; the firmament of heaven; or the boundless expanse of the ocean. All vastness produces the impression of sublimity. Space, however, extended in length, makes not so strong an impression, as height or depth. Though a boundless plain is a grand object; yet a lofty mountain, to which we look up, or an awful precipice or tower, whence we look down on objects below, is still more so. The excessive grandeur of the firmament arises from its height, added to its boundless extent; and that of the ocean, not from its extent alone, but from the continual mo-

tion and irreſiſtible force of that maſs of waters. Wherever ſpace is concerned, it is evident, that amplitude or greatneſs of extent in one dimenſion or other is neceſſary to grandeur. Remove all bounds from any object, and you immediately render it ſublime. Hence infinite ſpace, endleſs numbers, and eternal duration fill the mind with great ideas.

The moſt copious ſource of ſublime ideas ſeems to be derived from the exertion of great power and force. Hence the grandeur of earthquakes and burning mountains; of great conflagrations; of the boiſterous ocean; of the tempeſtuous ſtorm; of thunder and lightning; and of all the unuſual violence of the elements. A ſtream, which glides along gently within its banks, is a beautiful object; but, when it ruſhes down with the impetuoſity and noiſe of a torrent, it immediately becomes a ſublime one. A race-horſe is viewed with pleaſure; but it is the war-horſe, "whoſe neck is "clothed with thunder," that conveys grandeur in its idea. The engagement of two powerful armies, as it is the higheſt exertion of human ſtrength, combines various ſources of the ſublime; and has conſequently been ever conſidered, as one of the moſt ſtriking and magnificent ſpectacles, which can be either preſented to the eye, or exhibited to the imagination in deſcription.

All ideas of the ſolemn and awful kind, and even bordering on the terrible, tend greatly to aſſiſt the ſublime; ſuch as darkneſs, ſolitude, and ſilence. The firmament, when filled with ſtars, ſcattered in infinite numbers and with ſplendid profuſion, ſtrikes the imagination with more awful grandeur, than when we behold it enlightened by all the ſplendour of the ſun.

The deep ſound of a great bell, or the ſtriking of a great clock, is at any time grand and awful; but when heard amid the ſilence and ſtillneſs of night, they become doubly ſo. Darkneſs is very generally applied for adding ſublimity to all our ideas of the Deity. "He maketh darkneſs his pavilion; he dwelleth in "the thick cloud." Thus Milton—

——How oft amid
Thick clouds and dark does heaven's all-ruling Sire
Chooſe to reſide, his glory unobſcur'd;
And with the majeſty of darkneſs round
Circles his throne——

Obſcurity is favourable to the ſublime. The deſcriptions given us of appearances of ſupernatural beings, carry ſome ſublimity; though the conception, which they afford us, be confuſed and indiſtinct. Their ſublimity ariſes from the ideas, which they always convey, of ſuperior power and might connected with awful obſcurity. No ideas, it is evident, are ſo ſublime, as thoſe derived from the Supreme Being, the moſt unknown, yet the greateſt of all objects; the infinity of whoſe nature and the eternity of whoſe duration, added to the omnipotence of his power, though they ſurpaſs our conceptions, yet exalt them to the higheſt.

Diſorder is alſo very compatible with grandeur; nay, frequently heightens it. Few things, which are exactly regular and methodical, appear ſublime. We ſee the limits on every ſide; we feel ourſelves confined; there is no room for any conſiderable exertion of the mind. Though exact proportion of parts en-

ters often into the beautiful, it is much disregarded in the sublime. A great mass of rocks, thrown together by the hand of nature with wildness and confusion, strikes the mind with more grandeur, than if they had been adjusted to each other with the most accurate symmetry.

There yet remains one class of Sublime Objects to be mentioned, which may be termed the Moral or Sentimental Sublime, arising from certain exertions of the mind; from certain affections and actions of our fellow creatures. These will be found to be chiefly of that class, which comes under the name of Magnanimity or Heroism; and they produce an effect very similar to what is produced by a view of grand objects in nature, filling the mind with admiration, and raising it above itself. Wherever in some critical and dangerous situation we behold a man uncommonly intrepid, and resting solely upon himself; superior to passion and to fear; animated by some great principle to contempt of popular opinion, of selfish interest, of dangers, or of death; we are there struck with a sense of the sublime. Thus Porus, when taken by Alexander after a gallant defence, being asked, in what manner he would be treated; answered, "Like a King;" and Cæsar chiding the pilot, who was afraid to set out with him in a storm, "Quid times? Cæsarem vehis," are good instances of the Sentimental Sublime.

The sublime in natural and in moral objects is presented to us in one view, and compared together, in the following beautiful passage of Akenside's Pleasures of the Imagination.

Look then abroad through nature to the range
Of planets, ſuns, and adamantine ſpheres,
Wheeling, unſhaken, thro' the void immenſe;
And ſpeak, O Man! does this capacious ſcene,
With half that kindling majeſty, dilate
Thy ſtrong conception, as when Brutus roſe
Refulgent from the ſtroke of Cæſar's fate
Amid the crowds of patriots; and his arm
Aloft extending, like eternal Jove,
When guilt brings down the thunder, call'd aloud
On Tully's name, and ſhook his crimſon ſteel,
And bade the father of his country hail!
For lo! the tyrant proſtrate on the duſt;
And Rome again is free. ———

It has been imagined by an ingenious Author, that terror is the ſource of the ſublime; and that no objects have this character, but ſuch as produce impreſſions of pain and danger. Many terrible objects are indeed highly ſublime; nor does grandeur refuſe alliance with the idea of danger. But the ſublime does not conſiſt wholly in modes of danger and pain. In many grand objects there is not the leaſt coincidence with terror; as in the magnificent proſpect of widely extended plains, and of the ſtarry firmament; or in the moral diſpoſitions and ſentiments, which we contemplate with high admiration. In many painful and terrible objects alſo, it is evident, there is no ſort of grandeur. The amputation of a limb, or the bite of a ſnake, is in the higheſt degree terrible; but they are deſtitute of all claim whatever to ſublimity. It ſeems juſt to allow that mighty force or power, whether attended by terror or not, whether employed in protecting or alarming us, has a better title, than any

thing yet mentioned, to be the fundamental quality of the ſublime. There appears to be no ſublime object, into the idea of which ſtrength and force either enter not directly, or are not at leaſt intimately aſſociated by conducting our thoughts to ſome aſtoniſhing power, as concerned in the production of the object.

SUBLIMITY IN WRITING.

THE foundation of the Sublime in Compoſition muſt always be laid in the nature of the object deſcribed. Unleſs it be ſuch an object, as, if preſented to our ſight, if exhibited to us in reality, would excite ideas of that elevating, that awful, and magnificent kind, which we call Sublime; the deſcription, however finely drawn, is not entitled to be placed under this claſs. This excludes all objects, which are merely beautiful, gay or elegant. Beſides, the object muſt not only in itſelf be ſublime, but it muſt be placed before us in ſuch a light, as is beſt calculated to give us a clear and full impreſſion of it; it muſt be deſcribed with ſtrength, conciſeneſs, and ſimplicity. This depends chiefly upon the lively impreſſion, which the poet or orator has of the object, which he exhibits; and upon his being deeply affected and animated by the ſublime idea, which he would convey. If his own feeling be languid, he can never inſpire his reader with any ſtrong emotion. Inſtances, which on this ſubject are extremely neceſſary, will clearly ſhow the importance of all theſe requiſites.

It is chiefly among ancient authors, that we are to look for the moſt ſtriking inſtances of the ſublime. The early ages of the world and the uncultivated ſtate of ſociety were peculiarly favourable to the emotions of ſublimity. The genius of men was then very prone to admiration and aſtoniſhment. Meeting continually new and ſtrange objects, their imagination was kept glowing, and their paſſions were often raiſed to the utmoſt. They thought and expreſſed themſelves boldly without reſtraint. In the progreſs of ſociety the genius and manners of men have undergone a change more favourable to accuracy, than to ſtrength or ſublimity.

Of all writings, ancient or modern, the ſacred ſcriptures afford the moſt ſtriking inſtances of the ſublime. In them the deſcriptions of the Supreme Being are wonderfully noble, both from the grandeur of the object, and the manner of repreſenting it. What an aſſemblage of awful and ſublime ideas is preſented to us in that paſſage of the eighteenth Pſalm, where an appearance of the Almighty is deſcribed! "In my diſtreſs I called upon the Lord; he heard my "voice out of his temple, and my cry came before "him. Then the earth ſhook and trembled; the "foundations of the hills were moved; becauſe he "was wroth. He bowed the heavens, and came "down, and darkneſs was under his feet; and he "did ride upon a cherub, and did fly; yea, he did "fly upon the wings of the wind. He made dark-"neſs his ſecret place; his pavilion round about him "were dark waters and thick clouds of the ſky." The circumſtances of darkneſs and terror are here ap-

plied with propriety and ſucceſs for heightening the ſublime.

The celebrated inſtance, given by Longinus, from Moſes, "God ſaid, Let there be light; and there was "light," belongs to the true ſublime; and its ſublimity ariſes from the ſtrong conception, it conveys, of an effort of power producing its effect with the utmoſt ſpeed and facility. A ſimilar thought is magnificently expanded in the following paſſage of Iſaiah: (chap. xxiv. 24, 27, 28.) "Thus ſaith the Lord, thy Redeem-"er, and he that formed thee from the womb; I "am the Lord, that maketh all things; that ſtretch-"eth forth the heavens alone; that ſpreadeth abroad "the earth by myſelf; that ſaith to the deep, be "dry, and I will dry up thy rivers; that ſaith of "Cyrus, he is my ſhepherd, and ſhall perform all "my pleaſure; even ſaying to Jeruſalem, thou ſhalt "be built; and to the temple, thy foundation ſhall "be laid."

Homer has in all ages been univerſally admired for ſublimity; and he is indebted for much of his grandeur to that native and unaffected ſimplicity, which characteriſes his manner. His deſcriptions of conflicting armies; the ſpirit, the fire, the rapidity, which he throws into his battles, preſent to every reader of the Iliad frequent inſtances of ſublime writing. The majeſty of his warlike ſcenes is often heightened in a high degree by the introduction of the gods. In the twentieth book, where all the gods take part in the engagement, according as they ſeverally favour either the Grecians or the Trojans, the poet appears to put forth one of his higheſt efforts, and the deſcription riſes into the moſt awful magnificence. All na-

ture appears in commotion. Jupiter thunders in the heavens; Neptune ſtrikes the earth with his trident; the ſhips, the city, and the mountains ſhake; the earth trembles to its centre; Pluto ſtarts from his throne, fearing, leſt the ſecrets of the infernal regions ſhould be laid open to the view of mortals. We ſhall tranſcribe Mr. Pope's tranſlation of this paſſage; which, though inferior to the original, is highly animated and ſublime.

But, when the powers deſcending ſwell'd the fight,
Then tumult roſe, fierce rage, and pale affright.
Now thro' the trembling ſhores Minerva calls,
And now ſhe thunders from the Grecian walls.
Mars, hov'ring o'er his Troy, his terror ſhrouds
In gloomy tempeſts, and a night of clouds;
Now thro' each Trojan heart he fury pours
With voice divine from Ilion's topmoſt towers;
Above the Sire of gods his thunder rolls,
And peals on peals redoubled rend the poles.
Beneath, ſtern Neptune ſhakes the ſolid ground,
The foreſts wave, the mountains nod around;
Thro' all her ſummits tremble Ida's woods,
And from their ſources boil her hundred floods:
Troy's turrets totter on the rocking plain,
And the toſs'd navies beat the heaving main.
Deep in the diſmal region of the dead
The infernal monarch rear'd his horrid head,
Leap't from his throne, leſt Neptune's arm ſhould lay
His dark dominions open to the day,
And pour in light on Pluto's drear abodes,
Abhorr'd by men, and dreadful e'en to gods.
Such wars th' immortals wage; ſuch horrors rend
The world's vaſt concave, when the gods contend.

Conciſeneſs and ſimplicity will ever be found eſſential to ſublime writing. Simplicity is properly oppoſ-

ed to ſtudied and profuſe ornament; and conciſeneſs to ſuperfluous expreſſion. It will eaſily appear, why a defect either in conciſeneſs or ſimplicity is peculiarly hurtful to the ſublime. The emotion excited in the mind by ſome great or noble object, raiſes it conſiderably above its common pitch. A ſpecies of enthuſiaſm is produced, extremely pleaſing, while it laſts; but the mind is tending every moment to ſink into its ordinary ſtate. When an author has brought us, or is endeavouring to bring us into this ſtate, if he multiply words unneceſſarily; if he deck the ſublime object on all ſides with glittering ornaments; nay, if he throw in any one decoration, which falls in the leaſt below the principal image; that moment he changes the key; he relaxes the tenſion of the mind; the ſtrength of the feeling is emaſculated; the beautiful may remain; but the ſublime is extinguiſhed. Homer's deſcription of the nod of Jupiter, as ſhaking the heavens, has been admired in all ages, as wonderfully ſublime. Literally tranſlated, it runs thus: "He "ſpoke, and bending his ſable brows gave the awful "nod; while he ſhook the celeſtial locks of his im-"mortal head, all Olympus was ſhaken." Mr. Pope tranſlates it thus:

> He ſpoke; and awful bends his ſable brows,
> Shakes his ambroſial curls, and gives the nod,
> The ſtamp of fate, and ſanction of a God;
> High heaven with trembling the dread ſignal took,
> And all Olympus to its centre ſhook.

The image is expanded, and attempted to be beautified; but in reality it is weakened. The third line—"The ſtamp of fate, and ſanction of a God," is en-

tirely expletive, and introduced only to fill up the rhyme; for it interrupts the deſcription, and clogs the image. For the ſame reaſon Jupiter is repreſented, as ſhaking his locks, before he gives the nod; "Shakes "his ambroſial curls, and gives the nod;" which is trifling and inſignificant; whereas in the original the ſhaking of his hair is the conſequence of his nod, and makes a happy pictureſque circumſtance in the deſcription.

The boldneſs, freedom, and variety of our blank verſe are infinitely more propitious than rhyme, to all kinds of ſublime poetry. The fulleſt proof of this is afforded by Milton; an author, whoſe genius led him peculiarly to the ſublime. The firſt and ſecond books of Paradiſe Loſt are continued examples of it. Take for inſtance the following noted deſcription of Satan, after his fall, appearing at the head of his infernal hoſts:

——— ———He, above the reſt,
In ſhape and geſture proudly eminent,
Stood, like a tower; his form had not yet loſt
All her original brightneſs, nor appear'd
Leſs than archangel ruin'd, and the exceſs
Of glory obſcur'd: As when the ſun, new riſen,
Looks through the horizontal miſty air,
Shorn of his beams; or, from behind the moon,
In dim eclipſe, diſaſtrous twilight ſheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs. Darken'd ſo, yet ſhone
Above them all th' archangel.

Here various ſources of the ſublime are joined together; the principal object ſuperlatively great; a high, ſuperior nature, fallen indeed, but raiſing itſelf againſt diſtreſs; the grandeur of the principal object

heightened by connecting it with so noble an idea, as that of the sun suffering an eclipse; this picture, shaded with all those images of change and trouble, of darkness and terror, which coincide so exquisitely with the sublime emotion; and the whole expressed in a style and versification easy, natural, and simple, but magnificent.

Beside simplicity and conciseness, strength is essentially necessary to sublime writing. Strength of description proceeds in a great measure from conciseness; but it implies something more, namely, a judicious choice of circumstances in the description; such as will exhibit the object in its full and most striking point of view. For every object has several faces, by which it may be presented to us, according to the circumstances with which we surround it; and it will appear superlatively sublime, or not, in proportion as these circumstances are happily chosen, and of a sublime kind. In this, the great art of the writer consists; and indeed the principal difficulty of sublime description. If the description be too general, and divested of circumstances; the object is shewn in a faint light, and makes a feeble impression, or no impression, on the reader. At the time, if any trivial or improper circumstances be mingled, the whole is degraded.

The nature of that emotion, which is aimed at by sublime description, admits no mediocrity, and cannot subsist in a middle state; but must either highly transport us; or, if unsuccessful in the execution, leave us exceedingly disgusted. We attempt to rise with the writer; the imagination is awakened, and put upon the stretch; but it ought to be supported; and, if in

the midſt of its effort it be deſerted unexpectedly, it falls with a painful ſhock. When Milton in his battle of the angels deſcribes them, as tearing up mountains, and throwing them at one another; there are in his deſcription, as Mr. Addiſon has remarked, no circumſtances, but what are truly ſublime:

> From their foundations loos'ning to and fro,
> They pluck'd the ſeated hills with all their load,
> Rocks, waters, woods; and by the ſhaggy tops
> Uplifting, bore them in their hands.———

This idea of the giants throwing the mountains, which is in itſelf ſo grand, Claudian renders burleſque and ridiculous by the ſingle circumſtance of one of his giants with the mountain Ida upon his ſhoulders, and a river, which flowed from the mountain, running down the giant's back, as he held it up in that poſture. Virgil, in his deſcription of mount Ætna, is guilty of a ſlight inaccuracy of this kind. After ſeveral magnificent images, the poet concludes with perſonifying the mountain under this figure,

> ———"Eructans viſcera cum gemitu"———

"belching up its bowels with a groan;" which, by making the mountain reſemble a ſick or drunken perſon, degrades the majeſty of the deſcription. The debaſing effect of this idea will appear in a ſtronger light, from obſerving what figure it makes in a poem of Sir Richard Blackmore; who, through an extravagant perverſity of taſte, ſelected it for the principal circumſtance in his deſcription; and thereby, as Dr. Arburthnot humorouſly obſerves, repreſented the mountain as in a fit of the cholic.

Ætna and all the burning mountains find
Their kindled ſtores with inbred ſtorms of wind
Blown up to rage, and roaring out complain,
As torn with inward gripes and torturing pain;
Labouring, they caſt their dreadful vomit round,
And with their melted bowels ſpread the ground.

Such inſtances ſhow how much the ſublime depends upon a proper ſelection of circumſtances; and with how great care every circumſtance muſt be avoided, which, by approaching in the ſmalleſt degree to the mean, or even to the gay or trifling, changes the tone of the emotion.

What is commonly called the ſublime ſtyle, is for the moſt part a very bad one, and has no relation whatever to the true Sublime. Writers are apt to imagine that ſplendid words, accumulated epithets, and a certain ſwelling kind of expreſſion, by riſing above what is cuſtomary or vulgar, conſtitute the ſublime; yet nothing is in reality more falſe. In genuine inſtances of ſublime writing nothing of this kind appears. "God ſaid, Let there be light; and there was light." This is ſtriking and ſublime; but put it into what is commonly called the ſublime ſtyle: "The Sovereign "Arbiter of nature, by the potent energy of a ſingle "word, commanded the light to exiſt;" and, as Boileau juſtly obſerved, the ſtyle is indeed raiſed, but the thought is degraded. In general it may be obſerved, that the ſublime lies in the thought, not in the expreſſion; and, when the thought is really noble, it will generally clothe itſelf in a native majeſty of language.

The faults, oppoſite to the Sublime, are principally two, the Frigid and the Bombaſt. The Frigid conſiſts

in degrading an object or sentiment, which is sublime in itself, by a mean conception of it; or by a weak, low, or puerile description of it. This betrays entire absence, or at least extreme poverty of genius. The Bombast lies in forcing a common or trivial object out of its rank, and in labouring to raise it into the sublime; or in attempting to exalt a sublime object beyond all natural bounds.

BEAUTY AND OTHER PLEASURES OF TASTE.

BEAUTY next to Sublimity affords the highest pleasure to the imagination. The emotion, which it raises, is easily distinguished from that of sublimity. It is of a calmer kind; more gentle and soothing; does not elevate the mind so much, but produces a pleasing serenity. Sublimity excites a feeling, too violent to be lasting; the pleasure, proceeding from Beauty, admits longer duration. It extends also to a much greater variety of objects than sublimity; to a variety indeed so great, that the sensations which beautiful objects excite, differ exceedingly, not in degree only, but also in kind, from each other. Hence no word is used in a more undetermined signification than Beauty. It is applied to almost every external object, which pleases the eye or the ear; to many of the graces of writing; to several dispositions of the mind; nay, to some objects of abstract science. We speak frequently of a beautiful tree or flower; a

beautiful poem; a beautiful character; and a beautiful theorem in mathematics.

Colour seems to afford the simplest instance of Beauty. Association of ideas, it is probable, has some influence on the pleasure, which we receive from colours. Green, for example, may appear more beautiful from being connected in our ideas with rural scenes and prospects; white with innocence; blue with the serenity of the sky. Independently of associations of this sort, all that we can farther observe respecting colours is, that those, chosen for Beauty, are commonly delicate, rather than glaring. Such are the feathers of several kinds of birds, the leaves of flowers, and the fine variation of colours, shown by the sky at the rising and setting of the sun.

Figure opens to us forms of Beauty more complex and diversified. Regularity first offers itself as a source of Beauty. By a regular figure is meant one, which we perceive to be formed according to some certain rule, and not left arbitrary or loose in the construction of its parts. Thus a circle, a square, a triangle, or a hexagon, gives pleasure to the eye by its regularity, as a beautiful figure; yet a certain graceful variety is found to be a much more powerful principle of Beauty. Regularity seems to appear beautiful to us chiefly, if not entirely, on account of its suggesting the ideas of fitness, propriety, and use, which have always a more intimate connexion with orderly and proportioned forms, than with those which appear not constructed according to any certain rule. Nature, who is the most graceful artist, hath, in all her ornamental works, pursued variety with an apparent neglect of regularity. Cabinets, doors, and windows

are made after a regular form, in cubes and parallelograms, with exact proportion of parts; and thus formed, they please the eye; for this just reason, that, being works of use, they are by such figures better adapted to the ends for which they were designed. But plants, flowers, and leaves are full of variety and diversity. A straight canal is an insipid figure, when compared with the meanders of a river. Cones and pyramids have their degree of beauty; but trees, growing in their natural wildness, have infinitely more beauty, than when trimmed into pyramids and cones. The apartments of a house must be disposed with regularity for the convenience of its inhabitants; but a garden, which is intended merely for beauty, would be extremely disgusting, if it had as much uniformity and order as a dwelling-house.

Motion affords another source of Beauty, distinct from figure. Motion of itself is pleasing; and bodies in motion are, "cæteris paribus," universally preferred to those at rest. Only gentle motion however belongs to the Beautiful; for, when it is swift, or very powerful, such as that of a torrent, it partakes of the sublime. The motion of a bird gliding through the air is exquisitely beautiful; but the swiftness with which lightning darts through the sky, is magnificent and astonishing. Here it is necessary to observe, that the sensations of sublime and beautiful are not always distinguished by very distant boundaries; but are capable in many instances of approaching toward each other. Thus a gently running stream is one of the most beautiful objects in nature; but, as it swells gradually into a great river, the beautiful by

degrees is loſt in the ſublime. A young tree is a beautiful object; a ſpreading ancient oak is a venerable and ſublime one. To return, however, to the beauty of motion, it will be found to hold very generally, that motion in a ſtraight line is not ſo beautiful as in a waving direction; and motion upward is commonly more pleaſing than motion downward. The eaſy, curling motion of flame and ſmoke is an object ſingularly agreeable. Hogarth obſerves very ingeniouſly, that all the common and neceſſary motions for the buſineſs of life are performed in ſtraight or plain lines; but that all the graceful and ornamental movements are made in curve lines; an obſervation worthy of the attention of thoſe who ſtudy the grace of geſture and action.

Colour, figure, and motion, though ſeparate principles of Beauty, yet in many beautiful objects meet together, and thereby render the beauty greater and more complex. Thus in flowers, trees, and animals we are entertained at once with the delicacy of the colour, with the gracefulneſs of the figure, and ſometimes alſo with the motion of the object. The moſt complete aſſemblage of beautiful objects, which can be found, is repreſented by a rich natural landſcape, where there is a ſufficient variety of objects; fields in verdure, ſcattered trees and flowers, running water, and animals grazing. If to theſe be added ſome of the productions of art, ſuitable to ſuch a ſcene; as a bridge with arches over a river, ſmoke riſing from cottages in the midſt of trees, and a diſtant view of a fine building ſeen by the riſing ſun; we then enjoy in the higheſt perfection that gay, cheerful, and placid ſenſation, which characteriſes Beauty.

The beauty of the human countenance is more complex than any we have yet examined. It comprehends the Beauty of colour, arising from the delicate shades of the complexion; and the Beauty of figure, arising from the lines, which constitute different features of the face. But the principal Beauty of the countenance depends upon a mysterious expression, which it conveys of the qualities of the mind; of good sense, or good humour; of candour, benevolence, sensibility, or other amiable dispositions. It may be observed, that there are certain qualities of the mind, which, whether expressed in the countenance, or by words, or by actions, always raise in us a feeling similar to that of Beauty. There are two great classes of moral qualities; one is of the high and the great virtues, which require extraordinary efforts, and is founded on dangers and sufferings; as, heroism, magnanimity, contempt of pleasures, and contempt of death. These produce in the spectator an emotion of sublimity and grandeur. The other class is chiefly of the social virtues; and such as are of a softer and gentler kind; as, compassion, mildness, and generosity. These excite in the beholder a sensation of pleasure, so nearly allied to that excited by beautiful external objects, that, though of a more exalted nature, it may with propriety be classed under the same head.

Beauty of writing in its more definite sense characterises a particular manner; signifying a certain grace and amenity in the turn either of style or sentiment, by which some authors are particularly distinguished. In this sense it denotes a manner neither remarkably sublime, nor vehemently passionate, nor uncommonly sparkling; but such as excites in the reader an emo-

tion of the placid kind, reſembling that which is raiſed by contemplation of beautiful objects in nature; which neither lifts the mind very high, nor agitates it to exceſs; but ſpreads over the imagination a pleaſing ſerenity. Addiſon is a writer of this character, and one of the moſt proper examples of it. Fenelon, the author of Telemachus, is another example. Virgil alſo, though very capable of riſing occaſionally into the ſublime, yet generally is diſtinguiſhed by the character of beauty and grace, rather than of ſublimity. Among orators, Cicero has more of the beautiful than Demoſthenes, whoſe genius led him wholly toward vehemence and ſtrength.

So much it is neceſſary to have ſaid upon the ſubject of Beauty; ſince next to ſublimity it is the moſt copious ſource of the Pleaſures of Taſte. But objects delight the imagination not only by appearing under the forms of ſublime or beautiful; they likewiſe derive their power of giving it pleaſure from ſeveral other principles.

Novelty, for example, has been mentioned by Addiſon, and by every writer on this ſubject. An object which has no other merit than that of being new, by this quality alone raiſes in the mind a vivid and an agreeable emotion. Hence that paſſion of curioſity, which prevails ſo generally in mankind. Objects and ideas, which have been long familiar, make too faint an impreſſion, to give an agreeable exerciſe to our faculties. New and ſtrange objects rouſe the mind from its dormant ſtate, by giving it a ſudden and pleaſing impulſe. Hence in a great meaſure the entertainment we receive from fiction and romance. The emotion, raiſed by Novelty, is of a

more lively and awakening nature, than that produced by Beauty; but much shorter in its duration. For, if the object have in itself no charms to hold our attention, the gloss, spread over it by Novelty, soon wears off.

Imitation is another source of pleasure to Taste. This gives rise to what Addison terms the Secondary Pleasures of Imagination, which form a very extensive class. For all imitation affords some Pleasure to the mind; not only the imitation of beautiful or sublime objects, by recalling the original ideas of beauty or grandeur, which such objects themselves exhibited; but even objects, which have neither beauty, nor grandeur; nay, some, which are terrible or deformed, give us pleasure in a secondary or represented view.

The pleasures of melody and harmony belong also to Taste. There is no delightful sensation, we receive either from beauty or sublimity, which is not capable of being heightened by the power of musical sound. Hence the charm of poetical numbers; and even of the concealed and looser measures of prose. Wit, humour, and ridicule open likewise a variety of pleasures to Taste, altogether different from any that have yet been considered.

At present it is not necessary to pursue any farther the subject of the Pleasures of Taste. We have opened some of the general principles; it is time now to apply them to our chief subject. If it be asked, to what class of those Pleasures of Taste, which have been enumerated, that pleasure is to be referred, which we receive from poetry, eloquence, or fine writing? The answer is, not to any one, but to them all. This peculiar advantage writing and discourse possess; they

encompaſs a large and fruitful field on all ſides, and have power to exhibit in great perfection, not a ſingle ſet of objects only, but almoſt the whole of thoſe which give pleaſure to taſte and imagination; whether that pleaſure ariſe from ſublimity, from beauty in its various forms, from deſign and art, from moral ſentiment, from novelty, from harmony, from wit, humour, or ridicule. To which ſoever of theſe a perſon's taſte is directed, from ſome writer or other he has it always in his power to receive the gratification of it.

It has been uſual among critical writers to treat of diſcourſe, as the chief of all the imitative arts. They compare it with painting and with ſculpture, and in many reſpects prefer it juſtly before them. But we muſt diſtinguiſh between imitation and deſcription. Words have no natural reſemblance of the ideas or objects which they ſignify; but a ſtatue or picture has a natural likeneſs of the original.

As far however as a poet or hiſtorian introduces into his work perſons really ſpeaking, and by words, which he puts into their mouths, repreſents the converſation which they might be ſuppoſed to hold; ſo far his art may be called imitative; and this is the caſe in all dramatic compoſition. But in narrative or deſcriptive works it cannot with propriety be ſo called. Who, for example, would call Virgil's deſcription of a tempeſt in the firſt Æneid an imitation of a ſtorm? If we heard of the imitation of a battle, we might naturally think of ſome mock fight, or repreſentation of a battle on the ſtage; but ſhould never imagine it meant one of Homer's deſcriptions in the Iliad. It muſt be allowed at the ſame time, that imitation and deſcription agree in their principal effect, that

of recalling by external ſigns the ideas of things which we do not ſee. But, though in this they coincide, yet it ſhould be remembered, that the terms themſelves are not ſynonimous; that they import different means of producing the ſame end; and conſequently make different impreſſions on the mind.

ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF LANGUAGE.

TO form an adequate idea of the Origin of Language, we muſt contemplate the circumſtances of mankind in their earlieſt and rudeſt ſtate. They were then a wandering, ſcattered race; no ſociety among them except families; and family ſociety alſo very imperfect, as their mode of living, by hunting or paſturage, muſt have ſeparated them frequently from each other. In ſuch a condition, how could any one ſet of ſounds or words be univerſally agreed on, as the ſigns of their ideas? Suppoſing that a few, whom chance or neceſſity threw together, agreed by ſome means upon certain ſigns; yet by what authority could theſe be ſo propagated among other tribes or families, as to grow up into a language? One would imagine that men muſt have been previouſly gathered together in conſiderable numbers, before language could be fixed and extended; and yet on the other hand there ſeems to have been an abſolute neceſſity of ſpeech previous to the formation of ſociety. For by what bond could a multitude of men be kept together, or be connected in proſecution of any common intereſt, before by the aſſiſtance of ſpeech they

could communicate their wants and intentions to each other? So that, how ſociety could ſubſiſt previouſly to language, and how words could riſe into language before the formation of ſociety, ſeem to be points attended with equal difficulty. When we conſider farther that curious analogy which prevails in the conſtruction of almoſt all languages, and that deep and ſubtile logic, on which they are founded; difficulties increaſe ſo much upon us, on all ſides, that there ſeems to be no ſmall reaſon for referring the origin of all language to divine inſpiration.

But, ſuppoſing language to have a divine original, we cannot imagine that a perfect ſyſtem of it was at once given to man. It is much more natural to ſuppoſe that God taught our firſt parents only ſuch language as ſuited their preſent occaſions; leaving them, as he did in other reſpects, to enlarge and improve it as their future neceſſities ſhould require. Conſequently, thoſe rudiments of ſpeech muſt have been poor and narrow; and we are at liberty to inquire, in what manner, and by what ſteps, language advanced to the ſtate in which we now find it.

Should we ſuppoſe a period exiſted before words were invented or known; it is evident that men could have no other method of communicating their feelings, than by the cries of paſſion, accompanied by ſuch motions and geſtures, as were farther expreſſive of emotion. Theſe indeed are the only ſigns which nature teaches all men, and which are underſtood by all. One, who ſaw another going into ſome place, where he himſelf had been frightened, or expoſed to danger, and who wiſhed to warn his neighbour of the danger, could contrive no other method of doing it,

than by uttering thoſe cries, and making thoſe geſtures, which are the ſigns of fear; as two men at this day would endeavour to make themſelves underſtood by each other, if thrown together on a deſolate iſland, ignorant of each other's language. Thoſe exclamations, therefore, by grammarians called interjections, uttered in a ſtrong and paſſionate manner, were undoubtedly the elements of ſpeech.

When more enlarged communication became requiſite, and names began to be applied to objects; how can we ſuppoſe men proceeded in this application of names, or invention of words? Certainly by imitating, as much as they could, the nature of the object named by the ſound of the name given to it. As a painter, who would repreſent graſs, muſt employ a green colour; ſo in the infancy of language one, giving a name to any thing harſh or boiſterous, would of courſe employ a harſh or boiſterous ſound. He could not do otherwiſe, if he deſired to excite in the hearer the idea of that object which he wiſhed to name. To imagine words invented, or names given to things, without any ground or reaſon, is to ſuppoſe an effect without a cauſe. There muſt always have been ſome motive which led to one name, rather than another; and we can ſuppoſe no motive, which would more generally operate upon men in their firſt efforts toward language, than a deſire to paint by ſpeech the objects which they named in a manner more or leſs complete, according as it was in the power of the human voice to effect this imitation.

Wherever objects were to be named, in which ſound, noiſe, or motion was concerned, the imitation by words was ſufficiently obvious. Nothing was more

natural, than to imitate by the ſound of the voice the quality of the ſound or noiſe which any external object produced; and to form its name accordingly. Thus in all languages we diſcover a multitude of words, which are evidently conſtructed on this principle. A certain bird is called the Cuckoo, from the ſound which it emits. When one ſort of wind is ſaid to *whiſtle*, and another to *roar*; when a ſerpent is ſaid to *hiſs*; a fly to *buzz*, and falling timber to *craſh*; when a ſtream is ſaid to *flow*, and hail to *rattle*; the reſemblance between the word and the thing ſignified is plainly diſcernible. But in the names of objects which addreſs the ſight only, where neither noiſe nor motion is concerned; and ſtill more in terms, appropriated to moral ideas, this analogy appears to fail. Yet many learned men have imagined that, though in ſuch caſes it becomes more obſcure, it is not altogether loſt; and that in the radical words of all languages there may be traced ſome degree of correſpondence with the objects ſignified.

This principle however of a natural relation between words and objects, can be applied to language only in its moſt ſimple and early ſtate. Though in every tongue ſome remains of it may be traced, it were utterly in vain to ſearch for it through the whole conſtruction of any modern language. As terms increaſe in every nation, and the vaſt fields of language is filled up, words by a thouſand fanciful and irregular methods of derivation and compoſition deviate widely from the primitive character of their roots, and loſe all reſemblance in ſound of the things ſignified. This is the preſent ſtate of language. Words, as we now uſe them, taken in general, may be conſidered

as ſymbols, not imitations ; as arbitrary or inſtituted, not natural ſigns of ideas. But there can be no doubt that language, the nearer we approach to its riſe among men, will be found to partake more of a natural expreſſion.

Interjections, it has been ſhown, or paſſionate exclamations, were the elements of ſpeech. Men laboured to communicate their feelings to each other by thoſe expreſſive cries and geſtures, which nature taught them. After words, or names of objects, began to be invented, this mode of ſpeaking by natural ſigns could not be all at once diſuſed. For language in its infancy muſt have been extremely barren ; and there certainly was a period among all rude nations, when converſation was carried on by a very few words, intermixed with many exclamations and earneſt geſtures. The ſmall ſtock of words which men then poſſeſſed, rendered thoſe helps entirely neceſſary for explaining their conceptions ; and rude, uncultivated individuals, not having always ready even the few words which they know, would naturally labour to make themſelves underſtood by varying their tones of voice, and by accompanying their tones with the moſt expreſſive geſticulations.

To this mode of ſpeaking, neceſſity gave riſe. But we muſt obſerve that, after this neceſſity had in a great degree ceaſed, by language becoming in proceſs of time more extenſive and copious, the ancient manner of ſpeech ſtill ſubſiſted among many nations ; and, what had ariſen from neceſſity, continued to be uſed for ornament. In the Greek and Roman languages, a muſical and geſticulating pronunciation was retained in a very high degree. Without attending to this, we

ſhall be at a loſs in underſtanding ſeveral paſſages of the Claſſics, which relate to the public ſpeaking and theatrical entertainments of the ancients. Our modern pronunciation would have ſeemed to them a lifeleſs monotony. The declamation of their orators and the pronunciation of their actors upon the ſtage approached to the nature of recitative in muſic; was capable of being marked by notes, and ſupported by inſtruments; as ſeveral learned men have proved.

With regard to geſture, the caſe was parallel; for ſtrong tones and animated geſtures always go together. The action both of orators and players in Greece and Rome was far more vehement than that to which we are accuſtomed. To us, Roſcius would appear a madman. Geſture was of ſuch conſequence on the ancient ſtage, that there is reaſon for believing that on ſome occaſions the ſpeaking and the acting were divided; which, according to our ideas, would form a ſtrange exhibition. One player ſpoke the words in the proper tones, while another expreſſed the correſponding motions and geſtures. Cicero tells us, it was a conteſt between him and Roſcius, whether he could expreſs a ſentiment in a greater variety of phraſes, or Roſcius in a greater variety of intelligible ſignificant geſtures. At laſt, geſture engroſſed the ſtage entirely; for under the reigns of Auguſtus and Tiberius, the favourite entertainment of the public was the Pantomime, which was carried on by geſticulation only. The people were moved, and wept at it as much as at tragedies; and the paſſion for it became ſo violent, that laws were made for reſtraining the ſenators from ſtudying the pantomime art. Now, though in declamations and theatrical exhibitions both tone and geſ-

ture were carried much farther than in common diſcourſe; yet public ſpeaking of any kind muſt in every country bear ſome proportion to the manner which is uſed in converſation; and ſuch public entertainments could never be reliſhed by a nation whoſe tones and geſtures in diſcourſe were as languid as ours.

The early language of men, being entirely compoſed of words deſcriptive of ſenſible objects, became of neceſſity extremely metaphorical. For, to ſignify any deſire or paſſion, or any act or feeling of the mind, they had no fixed expreſſion which was appropriated to that purpoſe; but were obliged to paint the emotion or paſſion, which they felt, by alluding to thoſe ſenſible objects which had moſt connexion with it, and which could render it in ſome degree viſible to others.

But it was not neceſſity alone, that gave riſe to this pictured ſtyle. In the infancy of all ſocieties, fear and ſurpriſe, wonder and aſtoniſhment, are the moſt frequent paſſions of men. Their language will neceſſarily be affected by this character of their minds. They will be diſpoſed to paint every thing in the ſtrongeſt colours. Even the manner, in which the firſt tribes of men uttered their words, had conſiderable influence on their ſtyle. Wherever ſtrong exclamations, tones, and geſtures are connected with converſation, the imagination is always more exerciſed; a greater effort of fancy and paſſion is excited. Thus the fancy, being kept awake and rendered more ſprightly by this mode of utterance, operates upon ſtyle, and gives it additional life and ſpirit.

As one proof among many, which might be produced, of the truth of theſe obſervations, we ſhall

tranſcribe a ſpeech from Colden's Hiſtory of the Five Indian Nations, which was delivered by their Chiefs, when entering on a treaty of peace with us, in the following language. "We are happy in having buried under ground the red axe, that has ſo often been dyed in the blood of our brethren. Now in this fort we inter the axe, and plant the tree of peace. We plant a tree, whoſe top will reach the ſun; and its branches ſpread abroad, ſo that it ſhall be ſeen afar off. May its growth never be ſtifled and choked; but may it ſhade both your country and ours with its leaves! Let us make faſt its roots, and extend them to the utmoſt of your colonies. If the French ſhould come, to ſhake this tree, we ſhould know it by the motion of its roots reaching into our country. May the Great Spirit allow us to reſt in tranquillity upon our mats, and never again dig up the axe, to cut down the tree of peace! Let the earth be trodden hard over it, where it lies buried. Let a ſtrong ſtream run under the pit, to waſh the evil away out of our ſight and remembrance. The fire, that had long burned in Albany, is extinguiſhed. The bloody bed is waſhed clean, and the tears are wiped from our eyes. We now renew the covenant chain of friendſhip. Let it be kept bright and clean as ſilver, and not ſuffered to contract any ruſt. Let not any one pull away his arm from it."

As language in its progreſs grew more copious, it gradually loſt that figurative ſtyle, which was its early character. The vehement manner of ſpeaking by tones and geſtures became leſs common. Inſtead of poets, philoſophers became the inſtructors of men; and in their reaſoning on all ſubjects introduced that

plainer and more ſimple ſtyle of compoſition, which we now call Proſe. Thus the ancient metaphorical and poetical dreſs of Language was at length laid aſide in the intercourſe of men, and reſerved for thoſe occaſions only, on which ornament was profeſſedly ſtudied.

RISE AND PROGRESS OF LANGUAGE AND OF WRITING.

WHEN we examine the order in which words are arranged in a ſentence, we find a very remarkable difference between ancient and modern tongues. The conſideration of this will ſerve to unfold farther the genius of Language, and to ſhew the cauſes of thoſe alterations, it has undergone in the progreſs of ſociety.

To conceive diſtinctly the nature of this alteration, we muſt go back, as before, to the earlieſt period of Language. Let us figure to ourſelves a Savage beholding ſome fruit, which he earneſtly deſires, and requeſts another to give him. Suppoſe him unacquainted with words, he would ſtrive to make himſelf underſtood by pointing eagerly at the object deſired, and uttering at the ſame time a paſſionate cry. Suppoſing him to have acquired words, the firſt word which he would utter would be the name of that object. He would not expreſs himſelf according to our order of conſtruction, "Give me fruit;" but according to the Latin order, "Fruit give me," "Fructum "da mihi," for this plain reaſon, that his attention was wholly directed toward fruit, the object deſired. Hence

we might conclude *a priori*, that this was the order in which words were moſt commonly arranged in the infancy of Language; and accordingly we find in reality that in this order words are arranged in moſt of the ancient tongues, as in the Greek and Latin; and it is ſaid likewiſe in the Ruſſian, Sclavonic, Gaëlic and ſeveral American tongues.

The modern languages of Europe have adopted a different arrangement from the ancient. In their proſe compoſitions very little variety is admitted in the collocation of words; they are chiefly fixed to one order, which may be called the Order of the Underſtanding. They place firſt in the ſentence the perſon or thing, which ſpeaks or acts; next, its action; and laſtly, the object of its action. Thus an Engliſh writer, paying a compliment to a great man, would ſay, "It is im-"poſſible for me to paſs over in ſilence ſo diſtinguiſh-"ed mildneſs, ſo ſingular and unheard of clemency, "and ſo uncommon moderation, in the exerciſe of "ſupreme power." Here is firſt preſented to us the perſon who ſpeaks, "It is impoſſible for me;" next, what the ſame perſon is to do, "*to paſs over in ſilence;*" and laſtly, the object which excites him to action, "the mildneſs, clemency, and moderation of his pat-"ron." Cicero, from whom theſe words are tranſlated, reverſes this order. He begins with the object; places that firſt, which was the exciting idea in the ſpeaker's mind, and ends with the ſpeaker and his action. "Tantam manſuetudinem, tam inuſitatam in-"auditamque clementiam, tantumque in ſumma po-"teſtate rerum omnium modum, tacitus nullo modo "præterire poſſum." Here, it muſt be obſerved, the Latin order is more animated; the Engliſh more clear and diſtinct.

Our language naturally allows greater liberty for tranſpoſition and inverſion in poetry, than in proſe. Even there however this liberty is confined within narrow limits, in compariſon with the ancient languages. In this reſpect, modern tongues vary from each other. The Italian approaches the neareſt in its character to the ancient tranſpoſition; the Engliſh has more inverſion than the reſt; and the French has the leaſt of all.

Writing is an improvement upon Speech, and conſequently was poſterior to it in order of time. Its characters are of two kinds, ſigns of things, and ſigns of words. Thus the pictures, hieroglyphics, and ſymbols, employed by the ancients, were of the former ſort; the alphabetical characters, now employed by Europeans, of the latter.

Pictures were certainly the firſt attempt toward writing. Mankind in all ages and in all nations have been prone to imitation. This would ſoon be employed for deſcribing and recording events. Thus, to ſignify that one man had killed another, they painted the figure of one man lying on the ground, and of another ſtanding by him with a hoſtile weapon in his hand. When America was firſt diſcovered, this was the only kind of writing with which the Mexicans were acquainted. It was however a very imperfect mode of recording facts; ſince by pictures external events only could be delineated.

Hieroglyphical characters may be conſidered as the ſecond ſtage of the Art of Writing. They conſiſt of certain ſymbols, which are made to ſtand for inviſible objects on account of their ſuppoſed reſemblance of the objects themſelves. Thus an eye repreſented

knowledge; and a circle, having neither beginning nor end, was the ſymbol of eternity. Egypt was the country where this kind of writing was moſt ſtudied, and brought into a regular art. By theſe characters all the boaſted wiſdom of their prieſts was conveyed. They pitched upon animals to be the emblems of moral objects, according to the qualities with which they ſuppoſed them to be endued. Thus imprudence was denominated by a fly; wiſdom, by an ant; and victory, by a hawk. But this ſort of writing was in the higheſt degree enigmatical and confuſed; and conſequently a very imperfect vehicle of knowledge.

From hieroglyphics ſome nations gradually advanced to ſimple arbitrary marks, which ſtood for objects, though without any reſemblance of the objects ſignified. Of this nature was the writing of the Peruvians. They uſed ſmall cords of different colours; and by knots upon theſe, of different ſizes and variouſly ranged, they invented ſigns for communicating their thoughts to one another. The Chineſe at this day uſe written characters of this nature. They have no alphabet of letters or ſimple ſounds of which their words are compoſed; but every ſingle character, which they uſe, is expreſſive of an idea; it is a mark which ſignifies ſome one thing or object. The number of theſe characters muſt conſequently be immenſe. They are ſaid indeed to amount to ſeventy thouſand. To be perfectly acquainted with them is the buſineſs of a whole life; which muſt have greatly retarded among them the progreſs of every kind of ſcience.

It is evident that the Chineſe characters, like hieroglyphics, are ſigns of things, and not of words. For we are told, that the Japaneſe, the Tonquineſe, and

the Coreans, who speak different languages from each other, and from the inhabitants of China, use however the same written characters with them, and thus correspond intelligibly with one another in writing, though mutually ignorant of each others' language. Our arithmetical figures, 1, 2, 3, 4, &c. are an example of this sort of writing. They have no dependence on words; each figure represents the number for which it stands; and consequently is equally understood by all nations, who have agreed in the use of these figures.

The first step, to remedy the imperfection, the ambiguity, and the tediousness of each of the methods of communication, which have been mentioned, was the invention of signs, which should stand not directly for things, but for words by which things were named and distinguished. An alphabet of syllables seems to have been invented previously to an alphabet of letters. Such a one is said to be retained at this day in Æthiopia and some countries of India. But at best it must have been imperfect and ineffectual; since the number of characters, being very considerable, must have rendered both reading and writing very complex and laborious.

To whom we are indebted for the sublime and refined discovery of letters, is not determined. They were brought into Greece by Cadmus, the Phœnician, who, according to Sir Isaac Newton's Chronology, was contemporary with king David. His alphabet contained only sixteen letters. The rest were afterward added, according as signs for proper sounds were found to be wanting. The Phœnician, Hebrew, Greek, and Roman alphabets agree so much in the figure, names, and arrangement of the letters, as

amounts to demonſtration, that they were derived originally from the ſame ſource.

The ancient order of writing was from the right hand to the left. This method, as appears from ſome very old inſcriptions, prevailed even among the Greeks. They afterward uſed to write their lines alternately from the right to the left, and from the left to the right. The inſcription on the famous Sigæan monument is a ſpecimen of this mode of writing, which continued till the days of Solon, the celebrated Legiſlator of Athens. At length, the motion from the left hand to the right, being found more natural and convenient, this order of writing was adopted by all the nations of Europe.

Writing was firſt exhibited on pillars and tables of ſtone; afterward on plates of the ſofter metals. As it became more common, the leaves and bark of certain trees were uſed in ſome countries; and in others, tablets of wood, covered with a thin coat of ſoft wax, on which the impreſſion was made with a ſtylus of iron. Parchment, made of the hides of animals, was an invention of later times. Paper was not invented before the fourteenth century.

STRUCTURE OF LANGUAGE.

THE common diviſion of Speech into eight parts, nouns, pronouns, verbs, participles, adverbs, prepoſitions, interjections, and conjunctions, is not very accurate; ſince under the general term of nouns it comprehends both ſubſtantives and adjectives, which

are parts of ſpeech eſſentially diſtinct. Yet, as we are moſt accuſtomed to this diviſion, and, as logical exactneſs is not neceſſary to our preſent deſign, we ſhall adopt theſe terms, which habit has made familiar to us.

Subſtantive nouns are the foundation of Grammar, and the moſt ancient part of ſpeech. When men had advanced beyond ſimple interjections or exclamations of paſſion, and had begun to communicate their ideas to each other, they would be obliged to aſſign names to objects by which they were ſurrounded. Wherever a ſavage looked, he beheld foreſts and trees. To diſtinguiſh each by a ſeparate name would have been endleſs. Their common qualities, ſuch as ſpringing from a root, and bearing branches and leaves, would ſuggeſt a general idea and a general name. The genus, *tree*, was afterward ſubdivided into its ſeveral ſpecies of oak, elm, aſh, &c. upon experience and obſervation.

Still however only general terms were uſed in ſpeech. For oak, elm, and aſh, were names of whole claſſes of objects, each of which comprehended an immenſe number of undiſtinguiſhed individuals. Thus, when the nouns man, lion, or tree, were mentioned in converſation, it could not be known, which man, lion, or tree, was meant among the multitude, comprehended under one name. Hence aroſe a very uſeful contrivance for determining the individual object intended, by mean of that part of ſpeech called the Article. In Engliſh, we have two articles, *a* and *the*; *a* is more general, *the* more definite. The Greeks had but one, which agrees with our definite article *the*. They ſupplied the place of our article *a* by the abſence of their

article; thus Ανθρωπος signifies *a* man, ὁ Ανθρωπος *the* man. The Latins had no article; but in the room of it used the pronouns hic, ille, iste. This, however, seems a defect in their language; since articles certainly contribute much to perspicuity and precision.

To perceive the truth of this remark, observe the different imports of the following expressions: "The "son of a king, the son of the king, a son of the king's." Each of these three phrases has a separate meaning, too obvious to be misunderstood. But, in Latin, "filius regis" is entirely undetermined; it may bear either of the three senses mentioned.

Beside this quality of being defined by the article, three affections belong to nouns, number, gender and case, which deserve to be considered.

NUMBER, as it makes a noun significant of one or more, is singular or plural; a distinction found in all tongues, which must have been coeval with the origin of language, since there were few things, which men had more frequent necessity of expressing, than the distinction between one and more. In the Hebrew, Greek, and some other ancient languages, we find not only a plural, but a dual number; the origin of which may very naturally be accounted for, as separate terms of numbering were yet undiscovered, and one, two, and many, were all, or at least the principal numeral distinctions, which men at first had any occasion to make.

GENDER, which is founded on the distinction of the two sexes, can with propriety be applied to the names of living creatures only. All other nouns ought to be of the neuter gender. Yet in most languages the same distinction is applied to a great number of

inanimate objects. Thus, in the Latin tongue, *enfis*, a ſword, is maſculine ; *ſagitta*, an arrow, is feminine ; and this aſſignation of ſex to inanimate objects often appears entirely capricious. In the Greek and Latin, however, all inanimate objects are not diſtributed into maſculine and feminine ; but many of them are claſſed, where all ought to be, under the neuter gender ; as, *ſaxum*, a rock ; *mare*, the ſea. But in the French and Italian tongues, the neuter gender is wholly unknown, all their names of inanimate objects being put upon the ſame footing with thoſe of living creatures, and diſtributed without reſerve into maſculine and feminine. In the Engliſh language, all nouns, literally uſed, that are the names of living creatures, are neuter ; and ours is, perhaps, the only tongue (except the Chineſe, which is ſaid to reſemble it in this particular) in which the diſtinction of gender is philoſophically applied.

Case denotes the ſtate or relation which one object bears to another, by ſome variation of the name of that object ; generally in the final letters, and by ſome languages in the initial. All tongues however do not agree in this mode of expreſſion. Declenſion is uſed by the Greek and Latin ; but in the Engliſh, French, and Italian, it is not found ; or, at moſt, it exiſts in a very imperfect ſtate. Theſe languages expreſs the relations of objects by prepoſitions, which are the names of thoſe relations prefixed to the names of objects. Engliſh nouns have no caſe, except a ſort of genitive, commonly formed by adding the letter *s* to the noun ; as, when we ſay "Pope's Dunciad," meaning the Dunciad of Pope.

Whether the moderns have given beauty or utility to language, by the abolition of caſes, may perhaps be doubted. They have, however, certainly rendered it

more ſimple, by removing that intricacy which aroſe from different forms of declenſion, and from the irregularities of the ſeveral declenſions. But in obtaining this ſimplicity, it muſt be confeſſed, we have filled language with a multitude of thoſe little words, called prepoſitions, which, by perpetually occurring in every ſentence, encumber ſpeech; and, by rendering it more prolix, enervate its force. The ſound of modern language is alſo leſs agreeable to the ear, being deprived of that variety and ſweetneſs, which aroſe from the length of words, and the change of terminations, occaſioned by caſes in the Greek and Latin. But perhaps the greateſt diſadvantage we ſuſtain by the abolition of caſes, is the loſs of that liberty of tranſpoſition, in the arrangement of words, which the ancient languages enjoyed.

PRONOUNS are the repreſentatives of nouns, and are ſubject to the ſame modifications of number, gender, and caſe. We may obſerve, however, that the pronouns of the firſt and ſecond perſon, *I* and *thou*, have no diſtinction of gender in any language; for, as they always refer to perſons preſent, their ſex muſt be known, and therefore needs not to be marked by their pronouns. But, as the third perſon may be abſent, or unknown, the diſtinction of gender there becomes requiſite; and accordingly in Engliſh it hath all three genders, *he*, *ſhe*, *it*.

ADJECTIVES, as, *ſtrong*, *weak*, *handſome*, *ugly*, are the plaineſt and moſt ſimple in that claſs of words, which are termed attributive. They are common to all languages, and muſt have been very early invented; ſince objects could neither be diſtinguiſhed nor treated of in diſcourſe, before names were aſſigned to their different qualities.

STRUCTURE OF LANGUAGE. ENGLISH TONGUE.

OF all the parts of ſpeech, VERBS are by far the moſt complex and uſeful. From their importance we may juſtly conclude, that they were coeval with the origin of language; though a long time muſt have been requiſite to rear them up to that accuracy which they now poſſeſs.

The tenſes were contrived to mark the ſeveral diſtinctions of time. We commonly think of no more than its three great diviſions, the paſt, the preſent, and the future; and we might ſuppoſe that, if verbs had been ſo contrived as merely to expreſs theſe, no more was neceſſary. But language proceeds with much greater ſubtilty. It divides time into its ſeveral moments; it regards it as never ſtanding ſtill, but always flowing; things paſt, as more or leſs diſtant; and things future, as more or leſs remote by different gradations. Hence the variety of tenſes in almoſt every language.

The preſent may indeed be always regarded as one indiviſible point, which admits no variety; "I am," "*ſum.*" But it is not ſo with the paſt. Even the pooreſt language has two or three tenſes to expreſs its varieties. Ours has four. 1. A paſt action may be repreſented as unfiniſhed, by the imperfect tenſe; "I was walking, *ambulabam.*" 2. As finiſhed by the perfect tenſe, "I have walked." 3. As finiſhed ſome time ſince, the particular time being left undetermined; "I walked, *ambulavi:*" this is what gramma-

rians call an aoriſt or indefinite paſt. 4. As finiſhed before ſomething elſe, which is alſo paſt. This is the pluſquamperfect; "I had walked, *ambulaveram*. "I had walked before you called upon me." Our language, we muſt perceive with pleaſure, has an advantage over the Latin, which has only three variations of paſt time.

The varieties in future time are two; a ſimple or indefinite future; "I ſhall walk, *ambulabo*;" and a future having reference to ſomething elſe, which is likewiſe future; "I ſhall have walked, *ambulavero*; "I ſhall have walked, before he will pay me a viſit."

Beſide tenſes, verbs admit the diſtinction of voices, viz. the active and paſſive; as, "I love, or I am loved." They admit alſo the diſtinction of modes, which are intended to expreſs the perceptions and volitions of the mind under different forms. The indicative mode ſimply declares a propoſition; "I write; I have "written." The imperative requires, commands, or threatens; "Write thou; let him write." The ſubjunctive expreſſes a propoſition under the form of a condition, or as ſubordinate to ſomething to which reference is made; "I might write; I could write; "I ſhould write, if the matter were ſo." This expreſſion of the perceptions and volitions of the mind in ſo many various forms, together with the diſtinction of the three perſons, *I*, *thou*, and *he*, conſtitutes the conjugation of verbs, which makes ſo great a part of the Grammar of all languages.

Conjugation is reckoned moſt perfect in thoſe languages, which, by varying the termination, or the initial ſyllable of the verb, expreſſes the greateſt number of important circumſtances without the help of auxiliary

verbs. In the Oriental tongues verbs have few tenſes; but their modes are ſo contrived, as to expreſs a great variety of circumſtances and relations. In the Hebrew they ſay in one word, without the aid of an auxiliary, not only, "I taught," but, "I was taught; I "cauſed to teach; I was cauſed to teach; I taught "myſelf." The Greek, which is commonly thought to be the moſt perfect of all languages, is very regular and complete in the modes and tenſes. The Latin, though formed on the ſame model, is not ſo perfect; particularly in the paſſive voice, which forms moſt of the tenſes by the aid of the auxiliary "*ſum*." In modern European tongues, conjugation is very defective. The two great auxiliary verbs, to *have* and to *be*, with thoſe other auxiliaries, which we uſe in Engliſh, *do*, *ſhall*, *will*, *may*, and *can*, prefixed to a participle, or to another verb in the infinitive mode, ſuperſede in a great meaſure the different terminations of modes and tenſes which formed the ancient conjugations.

The other parts of ſpeech, as they admit no variation, will require only a ſhort diſcuſſion.

Adverbs are for the moſt part an abridged mode of ſpeech, expreſſing by one word what might, by a circumlocution, be reſolved into two or more words belonging to other parts of ſpeech. "Here," for inſtance, is the ſame with "in this place." Hence adverbs ſeem to be leſs neceſſary, and of later introduction into ſpeech, than ſeveral other claſſes of words; and accordingly moſt of them are derived from other words, formerly eſtabliſhed in the language.

Prepoſitions and conjunctions ſerve to expreſs the relations which things bear to one another, their mutual influence, dependence, and coherence; and ſo to

join words together, as to form intelligible propositions. Conjunctions are commonly employed for connecting sentences, or members of sentences; as, *and*, *because*, and the like. Prepositions are used for connecting words; as, *of*, *from*, *to*, &c. The beauty and strength of every language depend in a great measure on a proper use of conjunctions, prepositions, and those relative pronouns, which serve the same purpose of connecting different parts of discourse.

Having thus briefly considered the Structure of Language in general, we will now enter more particularly into an examination of our own Language.

The English, which was spoken after the Norman Conquest, and continues to be spoken now, is a mixture of the ancient Saxon and the Norman French, together with such new and foreign words, as commerce and learning have, in a succession of ages, gradually introduced. From the influx of so many streams, from a junction of so many dissimilar parts, it naturally follows, that the English, like every compounded language, must be somewhat irregular. We cannot expect from it that complete analogy in structure, which may be found in those simpler languages, which were formed within themselves, and built on one foundation. Hence our syntax is short, since there are few marks in the words themselves which show their relation to each other, or point out either their concordance or their government in a sentence. But, if these be disadvantages in a compound language, they are balanced by the advantages which attend it; particularly by the number and variety of words by which such a language is commonly enriched. Few languages are more copious than the English. In all

grave ſubjects eſpecially, hiſtorical, critical, political, and moral, no complaint can juſtly be made of the barrenneſs of our tongue. We are rich too in the language of poetry; our poetical ſtyle differs widely from proſe, not with reſpect to numbers only, but in the very words themſelves; which proves what a compaſs and variety of words we can ſelect and employ, ſuited to different occaſions. Herein we are infinitely ſuperior to the French, whoſe poetical language, if it were not diſtinguiſhed by rhyme, would not be known to differ from their ordinary proſe. Their language, however, ſurpaſſes ours in expreſſing whatever is delicate, gay, and amuſing. It is, perhaps, the happieſt language for converſation in the known world; but for the higher ſubjects of compoſition, the Engliſh is juſtly conſidered as far ſuperior to it.

The flexibility of a language, or its power of becoming either grave and ſtrong, or eaſy and flowing, or tender and gentle, or pompous and magnificent, as occaſions require; is a quality of great importance in ſpeaking and writing. This depends on the copiouſneſs of a language; the different arrangements of which its words are ſuſceptible; and the variety and beauty of the ſounds of its words. The Greek poſſeſſed theſe requiſites in a higher degree than any other language. It ſuperadded the graceful variety of its different dialects; and thereby readily aſſumed every kind of character, an author could wiſh, from the moſt ſimple and familiar, to the moſt majeſtic. The Latin, though very beautiful, is inferior in this reſpect to the Greek. It has more of a fixed character of ſtatelineſs and gravity; and is ſupported by a certain ſenatorial dignity, of which it is difficult

for a writer to diveſt it. Among modern tongues, the Italian poſſeſſes much more flexibility than the French; and ſeems to be on the whole the moſt perfect of all the modern dialects which have ariſen out of the ruins of the ancient. Our language, though unequal to the Italian in flexibility, is not deſtitute of a conſiderable degree of this quality. Whoever conſiders the diverſity of ſtyle in ſome of our beſt writers, will diſcover in our tongue ſuch a circle of expreſſion, ſuch a power of accommodation to the various taſtes of men, as redounds much to its honour.

Our language has been thought to be very deficient in harmony of ſound; yet the melody of its verſification, its power of ſupporting poetical numbers, without the aſſiſtance of rhyme, is a ſufficient proof, that it is far from being unharmonious. Even the hiſſing ſound, of which it has been accuſed, obtains leſs frequently, than has been ſuſpected. For in many words, and in the final ſyllables eſpecially, the letter *s* has the ſound of *z*, which is one of the ſounds on which the ear reſts with pleaſure; as in *has*, *theſe*, *loves*, *hears*, &c.

It muſt however be admitted, that ſmoothneſs is not the diſtinguiſhing property of the Engliſh tongue. Strength and expreſſiveneſs, rather than grace and melody, conſtitute its character. It poſſeſſes alſo the property of being the moſt ſimple of all the European dialects in its form and conſtruction. It is free from the intricacy of caſes, declenſions, modes, and tenſes. Its words are ſubject to fewer variations from their original form, than thoſe of any other language. Its nouns have no diſtinction of gender, except what is made by nature; and but one variation in caſe. Its adjectives admit no change, except what expreſſes the degree of

compariſon. Its verbs, inſtead of the varieties of ancient conjugation, admit only four or five changes in termination. A few prepoſitions and auxiliary verbs effect all the purpoſes of ſignificancy; while the principal words for the moſt part preſerve their form unaltered. Hence our language acquires a ſimplicity and facility, which are the cauſe of its being frequently written and ſpoken with inaccuracy. We imagine that a competent ſkill in it may be acquired without any ſtudy; and that in a ſyntax ſo narrow and limited as ours, there is nothing which requires attention. But the fundamental rules of ſyntax are common to the Engliſh and to the ancient tongues; and regard to them is abſolutely requiſite for writing or ſpeaking with propriety.

Whatever be the advantages or defects of our language, it certainly deſerves, in the higheſt degree, our ſtudy and attention. The Greeks and Romans in the meridian of their glory, beſtowed the higheſt cultivation on their reſpective languages. The French and Italians have employed much ſtudy upon theirs; and their example is worthy of imitation. For, whatever knowledge may be gained by the ſtudy of other languages, it can never be communicated with advantage, unleſs by thoſe who can write and ſpeak their own language with propriety. Let the matter of an author be ever ſo good and uſeful, his compoſitions will always ſuffer in the public eſteem, if his expreſſion be deficient in purity or propriety. At the ſame time, the attainment of a correct and elegant ſtyle is an object which demands application and labour. If any one ſuppoſe he can catch it merely by the ear, or acquire it by a peruſal of ſome of our good authors, he will be much diſappointed. The many grammatical errors, the

many impure expreſſions, which are found in authors who are far from being contemptible, demonſtrate that a careful ſtudy of our language is previouſly requiſite for writing it with propriety, purity, and elegance.

STYLE, PERSPICUITY, AND PRECISION.

STYLE is the peculiar manner in which a man expreſſes his thoughts by words. It is a picture of the ideas in his mind, and of the order in which they there exiſt.

The qualities of a good ſtyle may be ranged under two heads, perſpicuity and ornament. It will readily be admitted, that perſpicuity is the fundamental quality of a good ſtyle. Without this, the brighteſt ornaments only glimmer through the dark, and perplex inſtead of pleaſing the reader. If we be forced to follow a writer with much care; to pauſe, and to read over his ſentences a ſecond time, in order to underſtand them fully, he will not pleaſe us long. Men are too indolent to reliſh ſo much labour. Though they may pretend to admire an author's depth, after they have diſcovered his meaning, they will ſeldom be inclined to look a ſecond time into his book.

Perſpicuity requires attention firſt to ſingle words and phraſes, and then to the conſtruction of ſentences. When conſidered with reſpect to words and phraſes, it requires theſe three qualities, *purity*, *propriety*, and *preciſion*.

Purity and propriety of language are often uſed indiſcriminately for each other; and indeed they are

very nearly allied. A distinction, however, obtains between them. Purity is the use of such words and constructions as belong to the idiom of a particular language, in opposition to words and phrases which are imported from other languages, or which are obsolete, or newly coined, or employed without proper authority. Propriety is the choice of such words as the best and most established usage has appropriated to those ideas which we intend to express by them. It implies a correct and happy application of them, in opposition to vulgar or low expressions, and to words and phrases less significant of the ideas we intend to convey. Style may be pure, that is, it may be strictly English without Scotticisms or Gallicisms, or ungrammatical expressions of any kind, and yet be deficient in propriety. The words may be illy selected; not adapted to the subject, nor fully expressive of the author's meaning. He took them indeed from the general mass of English words; but his choice was made without skill. But style cannot be proper without being pure; it is the union of purity and propriety, which renders it graceful and perspicuous.

The exact meaning of precision may be learnt from the etymology of the word. It is derived from "*præ-*" "*cidere,*" to cut off; and signifies retrenching all superfluities, and pruning the expression in such manner, as to exhibit neither more nor less than the ideas intended to be conveyed.

Words, employed to express ideas, may be faulty in three respects. They may either not express the ideas which the author means, but some others which are only related; or they may express those ideas, but

not completely; or they may expreſs them together with ſomething more than he intends. Preciſion is oppoſed to theſe three faults; but particularly to the laſt, into which feeble writers are very apt to fall. They employ a multitude of words to make themſelves underſtood, as they think, more diſtinctly; but they only confound the reader. The image, as they place it before you, is always ſeen double. When an author tells us of his hero's *courage* in the day of battle; the expreſſion is preciſe, and we underſtand it fully. But if, from a deſire of multiplying words, he praiſe his *courage* and *fortitude*; at the moment he joins theſe words together, our idea begins to waver. He intends to expreſs one quality more ſtrongly; but he is in fact expreſſing two. *Courage* reſiſts danger; *fortitude* ſupports pain. The occaſions of exerting theſe qualities are different; and, being led to think of both together, when only one of them ſhould engage attention, our view is rendered unſteady, and our conception of the object indiſtinct.

The great ſource of a looſe ſtyle, the oppoſite of preciſion, is the injudicious uſe of words, called ſynonimous. Scarcely in any language are there two words that convey preciſely the ſame idea; and a perſon, perfectly acquainted with the propriety of the language, will always be able to obſerve ſomething by which they are diſtinguiſhed. In our language many inſtances may be given of difference in meaning among words, reputed ſynonimous; and, as the ſubject is important, we ſhall point out a few of them.

Surpriſed, aſtoniſhed, amazed, confounded. We are ſurpriſed at what is new or unexpected; we are aſtoniſhed at what is vaſt or great; we are amazed at

what is incomprehenſible; we are confounded by what is ſhocking or terrible.

Pride, vanity. Pride makes us eſteem ourſelves; vanity makes us deſire the eſteem of others.

Haughtineſs, diſdain. Haughtineſs is founded on a high opinion of ourſelves; diſdain on a low opinion of others.

To weary, to fatigue. Continuance of the ſame thing wearies us; labour fatigues us. A man is wearied by ſtanding; he is fatigued by walking.

To abhor, to deteſt. To abhor imports ſimply ſtrong diſlike; to deteſt imports likewiſe ſtrong diſapprobation. We abhor being in debt; we deteſt treachery.

To invent, to diſcover. We invent things which are new; we diſcover what is hidden. Galilæo invented the teleſcope; Harvey diſcovered the circulation of the blood.

Entire, complete. A thing is entire, when it wants none of its parts; complete, when it wants none of the appendages which belong to it. A man may occupy an entire houſe; though he have not one complete apartment.

Enough, ſufficient. Enough relates to the quantity, which we wiſh to have of a thing. Sufficient relates to the uſe that is to be made of it. Hence enough commonly ſignifies a greater quantity than ſufficient does. The covetous man never has enough; though he has what is ſufficient for nature.

Theſe are a few among many inſtances of words in our language, which by careleſs writers are apt to be miſtaken for ſynonimous. The more the diſtinction in the meaning of ſuch words is regarded, the more accurately and forcibly ſhall we ſpeak and write.

STRUCTURE OF SENTENCES.

A PROPER conſtruction of ſentences is of ſuch importance in every ſpecies of compoſition, that we cannot be too ſtrict or minute in our attention to it. For, whatever be the ſubject, if the ſentences be conſtructed in a clumſy, perplexed, or feeble manner; the work cannot be read with pleaſure, nor even with profit. But by attention to the rules which relate to this part of ſtyle, we acquire the habit of expreſſing ourſelves with perſpicuity and elegance; and, if a diſorder happen to ariſe in ſome of our ſentences, we immediately ſee where it lies, and are able to rectify it.

The properties moſt eſſential to a perfect ſentence are the four following. 1. Clearneſs. 2. Unity. 3. Strength. 4. Harmony.

Ambiguity is oppoſed to clearneſs, and ariſes from two cauſes; either from a wrong choice of words, or a wrong collocation of them. Of the choice of words, as far as regards perſpicuity, we have already ſpoken. Of the collocation of them we are now to treat. From the nature of our language a capital rule in the arrangement of our ſentences is, that words or members moſt nearly related, ſhould be placed as near to each other as poſſible, that their mutual relation may clearly appear. This rule is frequently neglected even by good writers. A few inſtances will ſhow both its importance and application.

In the poſition of adverbs, which are uſed to qualify the ſignification of ſomething which either precedes

or follows them, a good deal of nicety is to be obſerved. "By greatneſs," ſays Addiſon, "I do not only "mean the bulk of any ſingle object, but the large- "neſs of a whole view." Here the place of the adverb *only* makes it limit the verb *mean*. "I do not on- "ly mean." The queſtion may then be aſked, What does he more than mean? Had it been placed after *bulk*, ſtill it would have been wrong, for it might then be aſked, What is meant beſide the *bulk?* Is it the colour, or any other property? Its proper place is after the word *object:* "By greatneſs I do not mean the "bulk of any ſingle object only;" for then, when it is aſked, What does he mean more than the bulk of a ſingle object; the anſwer comes out preciſely as the author intends, "the largeneſs of a whole view." "Theiſm," ſays Lord Shafteſbury, "can only be oppoſ- "ed to polytheiſm or atheiſm." It may be aſked then, Is theiſm capable of nothing elſe, except being *oppoſed* to polytheiſm or atheiſm? This is what the words literally mean through the improper collocation of *only*. He ought to have ſaid, "Theiſm can be oppoſ- "ed only to polytheiſm or atheiſm." Inaccuracies of this kind occaſion little ambiguity in common diſcourſe, becauſe the tone and emphaſis, uſed by the ſpeaker, generally make the meaning perſpicuous. But in writing, where a perſon ſpeaks to the eye, he ought to be more accurate; and ſo to connect adverbs with the words they qualify, that his meaning cannot be miſtaken on the firſt inſpection.

When a circumſtance is interpoſed in the middle of a ſentence, it ſometimes requires attention to place it in ſuch manner as to diveſt it of all ambiguity. For inſtance, "Are theſe deſigns," ſays Lord Boling-

broke, "which any man, who is born a Briton, in any "circumstances, in any situation, ought to be ashamed "or afraid to avow?" Here we are in doubt, whether the phrases, "*in any circumstances, in any situation*," be connected with "a man born in Britain;" or with that man's "avowing his designs." If the latter, as seems most likely, was intended to be the meaning, the arrangement ought to be this, "Are these designs, which "any man, who is born a Briton, ought to be asham-"ed or afraid in any circumstances, in any situation, "to avow?"

Still more attention is requisite to a proper disposition of the relative pronouns *who*, *which*, *what*, *whose*; and of all those particles which express the connexion of the parts of speech. As all reasoning depends upon this connexion, we cannot be too accurate with regard to it. A small error may obscure the meaning of a whole sentence; and even where the meaning is apparent, yet if these relatives be misplaced, we always find something awkward and disjointed in the structure of the period. The following passage in Bishop Sherlock's Sermons will exemplify these observations: "It is folly to pretend to arm ourselves against "the accidents of life, by heaping up treasures which "nothing can protect us against, but the good provi-"dence of our heavenly Father." *Which* grammatically refers to the immediately preceding noun, which here is "treasures;" and this would convert the whole period into nonsense. The sentence should have been thus constructed: "It is folly to pretend by heaping "up treasures to arm ourselves against the accidents "of life, against which nothing can protect us, but "the good providence of our heavenly Father."

We now proceed to the second quality of a well arranged sentence, which we termed its Unity. This is a capital property. The very nature of a sentence implies one proposition to be expressed. It may consist of parts; but these parts must be so closely bound together, as to make an impression of one object only upon the mind.

To preserve this unity, we must first observe, that during the course of the sentence the subject should be changed as little as possible. There is generally in every sentence some person or thing which is the governing word. This should be continued so, if possible, from the beginning to the end of it. Should a man express himself in this manner: "After we came to "anchor, they put me on shore, where I was saluted "by all my friends, who received me with the great-"est kindness"—Though the objects in this sentence are sufficiently connected; yet, by shifting so often the subject and person, *we*, *they*, *I*, and *who*, they appear in so disunited a view, that the sense and connexion are nearly lost. The sentence is restored to its proper unity by constructing it thus: "Having come "to anchor, I was put on shore, where I was saluted "by all my friends, who received me with the great-"est kindness."

The second rule is, never crowd into one sentence ideas, which have so little connexion, that they might well be divided into two or more sentences. Violation of this rule never fails to displease a reader. Its effect indeed is so disgusting, that of the two it is the safest extreme, to err rather by too many short sentences, than by one, that is overloaded and confused. The following sentence from a translation of Plutarch will

juſtify this opinion: "Their march," ſays the author, ſpeaking of the Greeks, "was through an uncultivated country, whoſe ſavage inhabitants fared hardly, "having no other riches than a breed of lean ſheep, "whoſe fleſh was rank and unſavoury by reaſon of their "continual feeding upon ſea-fiſh." Here the ſubject is repeatedly changed. The march of the Greeks, the deſcription of the inhabitants, through whoſe country they paſſed, the account of their ſheep, and the reaſon of their ſheep being diſagreeable food, make a jumble of objects, ſlightly related to each other, which the reader cannot without conſiderable difficulty comprehend in one view.

The third rule for preſerving the unity of a ſentence is, keep clear of parentheſes in the middle of it. Theſe may on ſome occaſions have a ſpirited appearance, as prompted by a certain vivacity of thought, which can glance happily aſide, as it is going along. But in general their effect is extremely bad; being a perplexed method of diſpoſing of ſome thought, which a writer has not art enough to introduce in its proper place. It is needleſs to produce any inſtances, as they occur ſo frequently among incorrect writers.

The fourth rule for the unity of a ſentence is, bring it to a full and perfect cloſe. It needs not to be obſerved, that an unfiniſhed ſentence is no ſentence with reſpect to grammar. But ſentences often occur, which are more than finiſhed. When we have arrived at what we expected to be the concluſion; when we are come to the word, on which the mind is naturally led to reſt; unexpectedly ſome circumſtance is added, which ought to have been omitted, or diſpoſed of elſewhere. Thus, for inſtance, in the following ſentence

from Sir William Temple, the adjection to the ſentence is entirely foreign to it. Speaking of Burnet's Theory of the Earth, and Fontenelle's Plurality of Worlds; "The firſt," ſays he, "could not end his learned treatiſe without a panegyric of modern learning in compariſon of the ancient; and the other falls ſo groſsly "into the cenſure of the old poetry, and preference of "the new, that I could not read either of theſe ſtrains "without ſome indignation; which no quality among "men is ſo apt to raiſe in me, as ſelf ſufficiency." The word "indignation" concludes the ſentence; for the laſt member is added after the proper cloſe.

STRUCTURE OF SENTENCES.

WE now proceed to the third quality of a correct ſentence, which we termed Strength. By this is meant ſuch a diſpoſition of the ſeveral words and members as will exhibit the ſenſe to the beſt advantage; as will render the impreſſion, which the period is intended to make, moſt full and complete; and give every word and every member its due weight and force. To the production of this effect, perſpicuity and unity are abſolutely neceſſary; but more is requiſite. For a ſentence may be clear; it may alſo be compact, or have the requiſite unity; and yet, by ſome unfavourable circumſtance in the ſtructure, it may fail in that ſtrength or livelineſs of impreſſion, which a more happy collocation would produce.

The firſt rule for promoting the ſtrength of a ſentence is, take from it all redundant words. Whatever can be eaſily ſupplied in the mind, is better omitted in the expreſſion, thus, "Content with deſerving a triumph, he refuſed the honour of it," is better than "being content with deſerving a triumph, he refuſed "the honour of it." It is one of the moſt uſeful exerciſes, on reviewing what we have written, to contract that circuitous mode of expreſſion, and to cut off thoſe uſeleſs excreſcences which are uſually found in a firſt draught. But we muſt be cautious of pruning ſo cloſely, as to give a hardneſs and dryneſs to the ſtyle. Some leaves muſt be left to ſhelter and adorn the fruit.

As ſentences ſhould be cleared of ſuperfluous words, ſo alſo of ſuperfluous members. Oppoſed to this is the fault we frequently meet, the laſt member of a period being only a repetition of the former in a different dreſs. For example, ſpeaking of beauty, "The "very firſt diſcovery of it," ſays Addiſon, "ſtrikes "the mind with inward joy, and ſpreads delight "through all its faculties." In this inſtance ſcarcely any thing is added by the ſecond member of the ſentence to what was expreſſed in the firſt. Though the flowing ſtyle of Addiſon may palliate ſuch negligence, yet it is generally true, that language, diveſted of this prolixity, is more ſtrong and beautiful.

The ſecond rule for promoting the ſtrength of a ſentence is, pay particular attention to the uſe of copulatives, relatives, and particles, employed for tranſition and connexion. Some obſervations on this ſubject, which appear uſeful, ſhall be mentioned.

What is termed ſplitting of particles, or ſeparating a prepoſition from the noun which it governs, is ever to be avoided. For example, "Though virtue bor- "rows no aſſiſtance from, yet it may often be ac- "companied by, the advantages of fortune." In ſuch inſtances we ſuffer pain from the violent ſeparation of two things, which by nature are cloſely united.

The ſtrength of a ſentence is much injured by an unneceſſary multiplication of relative and demonſtrative particles. If a writer ſay, "there is nothing "which diſguſts me ſooner than the empty pomp of "language;" he expreſſes himſelf leſs forcibly, than if he had ſaid, "Nothing diſguſts me ſooner than "the empty pomp of language." The former mode of expreſſion in the introduction of a ſubject, or in laying down a propoſition, to which particular attention is demanded, is very proper; but in ordinary diſcourſe the latter is far preferable.

With regard to the relative we ſhall only obſerve, that in converſation and epiſtolary writing it may be omitted; but in compoſitions of a ſerious or dignified kind it ſhould conſtantly be inſerted.

On the copulative particle *and*, which occurs ſo often, ſeveral obſervations are to be made. It is evident, that an unneceſſary repetition of it enfeebles ſtyle. By omitting it we often make a cloſer connexion, a quicker ſucceſſion of objects, than when it is inſerted between them. "*Veni, vidi, vici,*" expreſſes with more ſpirit the rapidity of conqueſt, than if connecting particles had been uſed. When, however, we wiſh to prevent a quick tranſition from one object to another; and when enumerating objects which we wiſh to appear as diſtinct from each other as poſſi-

ble ; copulatives may be multiplied with peculiar advantage. Thus Lord Bolingbroke says with propriety, "Such a man might fall a victim to power ; but "truth, and reason, and liberty, would fall with him."

The third rule for promoting the strength of a sentence is, dispose of the principal word or words in that part of the sentence, where they will make the most striking impression. Perspicuity ought first to be studied ; and the nature of our language allows no great liberty of collocation. In general the important words are placed at the beginning of a sentence. Thus Mr. Addison : "The pleasures of the imagination, taken "in their full extent, are not so gross as those of "sense ; nor so refined as those of the understand-"ing." This order seems to be the most plain and natural. Sometimes, however, when we propose giving weight to a sentence, it is useful to suspend the meaning a little, and then to bring it out fully at the close. "Thus," says Pope, "on whatever side we "contemplate Homer, what principally strikes us, is "his wonderful invention."

The fourth rule for promoting the strength of sentences is, make the members of them go on rising in their importance one above another. This kind of arrangement is called a climax, and is ever regarded as a beauty in composition. Why it pleases is sufficiently evident. In all things we love to advance to what is more and more beautiful rather than to follow a retrograde order. Having viewed some considerable object, we cannot without pain descend to an inferior circumstance. "*Cavendum est*," says Quintilian, "*ne decrescat oratio, et fortior subjungatur aliquid infir-*"*mius*." A weaker assertion should never follow a

ſtronger one ; and, when a ſentence conſiſts of two members, the longeſt ſhould in general be the concluding one. Periods, thus divided, are pronounced more eaſily ; and, the ſhorteſt member being placed firſt, we carry it more readily in our memory, as we proceed to the ſecond, and ſee the connexion of the two more clearly. Thus to ſay, "When our paſſions "have forſaken us, we flatter ourſelves with the belief "that we have forſaken them," is both more graceful and more perſpicuous, than to begin with the longeſt part of the propoſition : "We flatter our- "ſelves with the belief that we have forſaken our paſ- "ſions, when they have forſaken us."

The fifth rule for conſtructing ſentences with ſtrength is, avoid concluding them with an adverb, a prepoſition, or any inſignificant word. By ſuch concluſions ſtyle is always weakened and degraded. Sometimes, indeed, where the ſtreſs and ſignificancy reſt chiefly upon words of this kind, they ought to have the principal place allotted them. No fault, for example, can be found with this ſentence of Bolingbroke : "In their proſperity my friends ſhall never "hear of me ; in their adverſity always ;" where *never* and *always*, being emphatical words, are ſo placed as to make a ſtrong impreſſion. But, when theſe inferior parts of ſpeech are introduced, as circumſtances, or as qualifications of more important words, they ſhould always be diſpoſed of in the leaſt conſpicuous parts of the period.

We ſhould always avoid concluding a ſentence or member with any of thoſe particles which diſtinguiſh the caſes of nouns ; as, *of*, *to*, *from*, *with*, *by*. Thus it is much better to ſay, "Avarice is a crime, of which

" wife men are often guilty," than to fay, " Avarice " is a crime which wife men are often guilty of." This is a phrafeology which all correct writers fhun.

A complex verb, compounded of a fimple verb and a fubfequent prepofition, is alfo an ungraceful concluſion of a period ; as, *bring about*, *clear up*, *give over*, and many others of the fame kind ; inftead of which, if a fimple verb be employed, it will terminate the fentence with more ftrength. Even the pronoun *it*, efpecially when joined with fome of the prepofitions, as, *with it*, *in it*, *to it*, cannot without violation of grace be the concluſion of a fentence. Any phrafe, which expreffes a circumftance only, cannot conclude a fentence without great inelegance. Circumftances indeed are like unfhapely ftones in a building which try the fkill of an artift where to place them with the leaft offence. We fhould not crowd too many of them together ; but rather interfperfe them in different parts of the fentence, joined with the principal words on which they depend. Thus, for inftance, when Dean Swift fays, " What I had the honour of " mentioning to your Lordfhip fome time ago in con- " verfation, was not a new thought ;" thefe two circumftances, *fome time ago* and *in converfation*, which are joined, would have been better feparated thus : " What I had the honour fome time ago of mention- " ing to your Lordfhip in converfation."

The fixth and laft rule concerning the ftrength of a fentence is this, in the members of it, where two things are compared or contrafted ; where either refemblance or oppofition is to be expreffed ; fome refemblance in the language and conftruction ought to be obferved. The following paffage from Pope's pre-

face to his Homer beautifully exemplifies this rule. "Homer was the greater genius; Virgil the better "artiſt; in the one we admire the man; in the other "the work. Homer hurries us with a commanding "impetuoſity; Virgil leads us with an attractive maj- "eſty. Homer ſcatters with a generous profuſion; "Virgil beſtows with a careful magnificence. Homer, "like the Nile, pours out his riches with a ſudden "overflow; Virgil, like a river in its banks, with a "conſtant ſtream. When we look upon their ma- "chines, Homer ſeems like his own Jupiter in his ter- "rors, ſhaking Olympus, ſcattering lightnings, and fir- "ing the heavens. Virgil like the ſame power in his "benevolence, counſelling with the gods, laying plans "for empires, and ordering his whole creation." Periods, thus conſtructed, when introduced with propriety, and not too frequently repeated, have a ſenſible beauty. But, if ſuch a conſtruction be aimed at in every ſentence, it betrays into a diſagreeable uniformity, and produces a regular jingle in the period, which tires the ear, and plainly diſcovers affectation.

STRUCTURE OF SENTENCES. HARMONY.

HAVING conſidered ſentences with regard to their meaning under the heads of Perſpicuity, Unity, and Strength; we ſhall now conſider them with reſpect to their ſound.

In the harmony of periods two things are to be conſidered. Firſt, agreeable ſound or modulation in general without any particular expreſſion. Next, the ſound

ſo ordered as to become expreſſive of the ſenſe. The firſt is the more common; the ſecond the ſuperior beauty.

The beauty of muſical conſtruction depends upon the choice and arrangement of words. Thoſe words are moſt pleaſing to the ear, which are compoſed of ſmooth and liquid ſounds, in which there is a proper intermixture of vowels and conſonants without too many harſh conſonants, or too many open vowels in ſucceſſion. Long words are generally more pleaſing to the ear than monoſyllables; and thoſe are the moſt muſical, which are not wholly compoſed of long and ſhort ſyllables, but of an intermixture of them; ſuch as *delight*, *amuſe*, *velocity*, *celerity*, *beautiful*, *impetuoſity*. If the words, however, which compoſe a ſentence, be ever ſo well choſen and harmonious; yet, if they be unſkilfully arranged, its muſic is entirely loſt. As an inſtance of a muſical ſentence, we may take the following from Milton: "We ſhall conduct you to a "hill-ſide, laborious indeed at the firſt aſcent; but "elſe, ſo ſmooth, ſo green, ſo full of goodly proſpects "and melodious ſounds on every ſide, that the harp "of Orpheus was not more charming." Every thing in this ſentence conſpires to render it harmonious. The words are well choſen; *laborious*, *ſmooth*, *green*, *goodly*, *melodious*, *charming*; and ſo happily arranged, that no alteration can be made without injuring the melody.

There are two things on which the muſic of a ſentence principally depends; theſe are, the proper diſtribution of the ſeveral members of it, and the cloſe or cadence of the whole.

First, the distribution of the several members should be carefully regarded. Whatever is easy to the organs of speech, is always grateful to the ear. While a period advances, the termination of each member forms a pause in the pronunciation; and these pauses should be so distributed, as to bear a certain musical proportion to each other. This will be best illustrated by examples. "This discourse concerning the easi-"ness of God's commands does all along suppose and "acknowledge the difficulties of the first entrance up-"on a religious course; except only in those persons "who have had the happiness to be trained up to relig-"ion by the easy and insensible degrees of a pious and "virtuous education." This sentence is far from being harmonious owing chiefly to this, that there is but one pause in it, by which it is divided into two members; each of which is so long as to require a considerable stretch of breath in pronouncing it. On the contrary, let us observe the grace of the following passage from Sir William Temple, in which he speaks sarcastically of man. "But, God be thanked, his "pride is greater than his ignorance; and, what he "wants in knowledge, he supplies by sufficiency. "When he has looked about him as far as he can, "he concludes there is no more to be seen; when he "is at the end of his line, he is at the bottom of the "ocean; when he has shot his best, he is sure none "ever did, or even can shoot better, or beyond it. "His own reason he holds to be the certain measure "of truth; and his own knowledge of what is possi-"ble in nature." Here every thing is at once easy to the breath, and grateful to the ear. We must how-

ever obſerve, that if compoſition abound with ſentences, which have too many reſts, and theſe placed at intervals apparently meaſured and regular, it is apt to ſavour of affectation.

The next thing which demands attention, is the cloſe or cadence of the period. The only important rule, which can here be given, is this, when we aim at dignity or elevation, the ſound ſhould increaſe to the laſt; the longeſt members of the period, and the fulleſt and moſt ſonorous words ſhould be reſerved for the concluſion. As an inſtance of this, the following ſentence of Addiſon may be given. "It fills the mind "with the largeſt variety of ideas; converſes with its "objects at the greateſt diſtance; and continues the "longeſt in action without being tired or ſatiated with "its proper enjoyments." Here every reader muſt be ſenſible of beauty in the juſt diſtribution of the pauſes, and in the manner of rounding the period, and of bringing it to a full and harmonious cloſe.

It may be remarked, that little words in the concluſion of a ſentence are as injurious to melody, as they are inconſiſtent with ſtrength of expreſſion. A muſical cloſe in our language ſeems in general to require either the laſt ſyllable, or the laſt but one, to be a long ſyllable. Words which conſiſt chiefly of ſhort ſyllables, as *contrary*, *particular*, *retroſpect*, ſeldom terminate a ſentence harmonioufly, unleſs a previous run of long ſyllables have rendered them pleaſing to the ear.

Sentences, however, which are ſo conſtructed as to make the ſound always ſwell toward the end, and reſt either on the laſt or penult ſyllable, give a diſcourſe the tone of declamation. If melody be not varied, the ear is ſoon cloyed with it. Sentences conſtructed in the

ſame manner, with the pauſes at equal intervals, ſhould never ſucceed each other. Short ſentences muſt be blended with long and ſwelling ones, to render diſcourſe ſprightly as well as magnificent.

We now proceed to treat of a higher ſpecies of harmony; the ſound adapted to the ſenſe. Of this we may remark two degrees. Firſt, the current of ſound ſuited to the tenor of a diſcourſe. Next, a peculiar reſemblance effected between ſome object and the ſounds that are employed in deſcribing it.

Sounds have in many reſpects an intimate correſpondence with our ideas; partly natural, partly produced by artificial aſſociations. Hence any one modulation of ſound continued, ſtamps on ſtyle a certain character and expreſſion. Sentences, conſtructed with Ciceronian fulneſs, excite an idea of what is important, magnificent, and ſedate. But they ſuit no violent paſſion, no eager reaſoning, no familiar addreſs. Theſe require meaſures briſker, eaſier, and often more abrupt. It were as abſurd to write a panegyric and an invective in a ſtyle of the ſame cadence, as to ſet the words of a tender love-ſong to the tune of a warlike march.

Beſide the general correſpondence of the current of ſound with the current of thought, a more particular expreſſion of certain objects by reſembling ſounds may be attempted. In poetry this reſemblance is chiefly to be ſought. It obtains ſometimes indeed in proſe compoſition; but there in an inferior degree.

The ſounds of words may be employed for repreſenting chiefly three claſſes of objects; firſt, other ſounds; ſecondly, motions; and thirdly, the emotions and paſſions of the mind.

In moſt languages the names of many particular ſounds are ſo formed, as to bear ſome reſemblance of the ſound which they ſignify; as with us the *whiſtling* of winds, the *buzz* and *hum* of inſects, the *hiſs* of ſerpents, and the *craſh* of falling timber; and many other inſtances, where the name is plainly adapted to the ſound it repreſents. A remarkable example of this beauty may be taken from two paſſages in Milton's Paradiſe Loſt; in one of which he deſcribes the ſound, made by the opening of the gates of hell; in the other, that made by the opening of the gates of heaven. The contraſt between the two exhibits to great advantage the art of the poet. The firſt is the opening of hell's gates;

> ——————On a ſudden open fly
> With impetuous recoil and jarring ſound
> Th' infernal doors; and on their hinges grate
> Harſh thunder.——————

Obſerve the ſmoothneſs of the other;

> ——————Heaven open'd wide
> Her ever during gates, harmonious ſound!
> On golden hinges turning.——————

In the ſecond place the ſound of words is frequently employed to imitate motion; as it is ſwift or ſlow, violent or gentle, uniform or interrupted, eaſy or accompanied with effort. Between ſound and motion there is no natural affinity; yet in the imagination there is a ſtrong one; as is evident from the connexion between muſic and dancing. The poet can therefore give us a lively idea of the kind of motion he would deſcribe, by the help of ſounds which

in our imagination correſpond with that motion. Long ſyllables naturally excite an idea of ſlow motion; as in this line of Virgil,

Olli inter ſeſe magna vi brachia tollunt.

A ſucceſſion of ſhort ſyllables gives the impreſſion of quick motion; as,

Sed fugit interea, fugit irreparabile tempus.

The works of Homer and Virgil abound with inſtances of this beauty; which are ſo often quoted, and ſo well known, that it is unneceſſary to produce them.

The third ſet of objects, which the ſound of words is capable of repreſenting, conſiſts of emotions and paſſions of the mind. Between ſenſe and ſound there appears to be no natural reſemblance. But, if the arrangement of ſyllables by their ſound alone recal one ſet of ideas more readily than another, and diſpoſe the mind for entering into that affection which the poet intends to raiſe; ſuch arrangement may with propriety be ſaid to reſemble the ſenſe. Thus, when pleaſure, joy, and agreeable objects are deſcribed by one who feels his ſubject, the language naturally runs in ſmooth, liquid, and flowing numbers.

——Namque ipſa decoram
Cæſariem nato genetrix, lumenque juventæ
Purpureum, et lætos oculis afflarat honores.

Briſk and lively ſenſations exact quicker and more animated numbers.

——Juvenum manus emicat ardens
Littus in Heſperium.

Melancholy and gloomy ſubjects are naturally connected with ſlow meaſures and long words.

In thoſe deep ſolitudes and awful cells,
Where heavenly penſive contemplation dwells.

Abundant inſtances of this kind are ſuggeſted by a moderate acquaintance with good poets, either ancient or modern.

ORIGIN AND NATURE OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE.

FIGURES may be deſcribed to be that language which is prompted either by the imagination or paſſions. They are commonly divided by rhetoricians into two great claſſes, figures of words, and figures of thought. The former are commonly called tropes, and conſiſt in a word's being uſed to ſignify ſomething different from its original meaning. Hence, if the word be changed, the figure is deſtroyed. Thus, for inſtance, "Light "ariſeth to the upright in darkneſs." Here the trope conſiſts in "light and darkneſs" not being taken literally, but ſubſtituted for comfort and adverſity; to which conditions of life they are ſuppoſed to bear ſome reſemblance. The other claſs, termed figures of thought, ſuppoſes the figure to conſiſt in the ſentiment only, while the words are uſed in their literal ſenſe; as in exclamations, interrogations, apoſtrophes, and compariſons; where, though the words be varied, or tranſlated from one language into another, the ſame figure is ſtill preſerved. This diſtinction

however is of ſmall importance; as practice cannot be aſſiſted by it; nor is it always very perſpicuous.

Tropes are derived in part from the barrenneſs of language; but principally from the influence, which the imagination has over all language. The imagination never contemplates any one idea or object as ſingle and alone, but as accompanied by others which may be conſidered as its acceſſories. Theſe acceſſories often operate more forcibly upon the mind, than the principal idea itſelf. They are perhaps in their nature more agreeable; or more familiar to our conceptions; or remind us of a greater variety of important circumſtances. Hence the name of the acceſſory or correſpondent idea is ſubſtituted; although the principal has a proper and well known name of its own. Thus, for example, when we deſign to point out the period in which a ſtate enjoyed moſt reputation or glory, we might eaſily employ the proper words for expreſſing this; but as this in our imagination is readily connected with the flouriſhing period of a plant or tree, we prefer this correſpondent idea, and ſay, "The Roman Empire flouriſhed moſt "under Auguſtus." The leader of a faction is a plain expreſſion; but, becauſe the head is the principal part of the human body, and is ſuppoſed to direct all the animal operations; reſting on this reſemblance, we ſay, "Catiline was the head of his party."

We ſhall now examine, why tropes and figures contribute to the beauty and grace of ſtyle. By them language is enriched, and made more copious. Hence words and phraſes are multiplied for expreſſing all ſorts of ideas; for deſcribing even the ſmalleſt differences; the niceſt ſhades and colours of thought;

which by proper words alone cannot poſſibly be expreſſed. They alſo give dignity to ſtyle, which is degraded by the familiarity of common words. Figures have the ſame effect on language, that a rich and ſplendid apparel has on a perſon of rank and dignity. In proſe compoſitions aſſiſtance of this kind is often requiſite; to poetry it is eſſential. To ſay, "the ſun "riſes," is common and trite; but it becomes a magnificent image, as expreſſed by Thomſon:

> But yonder comes the powerful king of day
> Rejoicing in the eaſt.———

Figures furniſh the pleaſure of enjoying two objects, preſented at the ſame time to our view, without confuſion; the principal idea together with its acceſſory, which gives it the figurative appearance. When, for example, inſtead of "youth," we ſay, "the morning "of life;" the fancy is inſtantly entertained with all the correſponding circumſtances between theſe two objects. At the ſame inſtant we behold a certain period of human life, and a certain time of the day ſo connected, that the imagination plays between them with delight, and views at once two ſimilar objects without embarraſſment.

Figures are alſo attended with the additional advantage of giving us a more clear and ſtriking view of the principal object, than if it were expreſſed in ſimple terms, and freed from its acceſſory idea. They exhibit the object, on which they are employed, in a pictureſque form; they render an abſtract conception in ſome degree an object of ſenſe; they ſurround it with circumſtances, which enable the mind to lay hold of it ſteadily, and to contemplate it fully. By a well

adapted figure, even conviction is assisted, and a truth is impressed upon the mind with additional liveliness and force. Thus in the following passage of Dr. Young: "When we dip too deep in pleasure, we "always stir a sediment, that renders it impure and "noxious." When an image presents such a resemblance between a moral and sensible idea, it serves like an argument from analogy, to enforce what the author advances, and to induce belief.

All tropes being founded on the relation which one object bears to another, the name of the one may be substituted for that of the other; and by this the vivacity of the idea is generally increased. The relation between a cause and its effect is one of the first and most obvious. Hence the cause is sometimes figuratively put for the effect. Thus Mr. Addison, writing of Italy, says,

> Blossoms, and fruits, and flowers together rise,
> And the whole year in gay confusion lies.

Here the "whole year" is plainly meant to signify the productions of the year. The effect is also often put for the cause; as "grey hairs" for "old age," which produces grey hairs; and "shade" for the "trees," which cause the shade. The relation between the container and the thing contained is so intimate and apparent, as naturally to give rise to tropes.

> ——————Ille impiger hausit
> Spumantem pateram, et pleno se proluit auro.

Where it is obvious, that the cup and gold are put for the liquor, contained in the golden cup. The name of a country is often used to signify its inhabit-

ants. To pray for the assistance of Heaven is the same with praying for the assistance of God, who is in heaven. The relation between a sign and the thing signified is another source of tropes. Thus,

Cedant arma togæ ; concedat laurea linguæ.

Here the "toga," which is the badge of the civil professions, and the "laurel," that of military honours, are each of them put for the civil and military characters themselves. Tropes, founded on these several relations of cause and effect, container and contained, sign and thing signified, are called by the name of metonomy.

When a trope is founded on the relation between an antecedent and its consequent, it is called a metalepsis ; as in the Roman phrase, "fuit," or "vixit," to signify that one was dead. "Fuit Ilium et ingens "gloria Teucrum" expresses that the glory of Troy is no more.

When the whole is put for a part, or a part for the whole ; a genus for a species, or a species for a genus ; the singular number for the plural, or the plural for the singular ; in general, when any thing less, or any thing more, is put for the precise object meant ; the figure is then termed a synecdoche. We say, for instance, "A fleet of so many sail" instead of so many "ships ;" we frequently use the "head" for the "person," the "pole" for the "earth," the "waves" for the "sea." An attribute is often used for its subject ; as, "youth and beauty" for the "young and beautiful ;" and sometimes a subject for its attribute. But the relation, by far the most fruitful of tropes, is similitude, which is the sole foundation of metaphor.

METAPHOR.

METAPHOR is founded entirely on the reſemblance which one object bears to another. It is therefore nearly allied to ſimile or compariſon; and is indeed a compariſon in an abridged form. When we ſay of a great miniſter, "he upholds the "ſtate, like a pillar, which ſupports the weight of "an edifice," we evidently make a compariſon; but, when we ſay of him, he is "the pillar of the ſtate," it becomes a metaphor.

Of all the figures of ſpeech none approaches ſo near to painting, as metaphor. It gives light and ſtrength to deſcription; makes intellectual ideas in ſome degree viſible, by giving them colour, ſubſtance and ſenſible qualities. To produce this effect, however, a delicate hand is requiſite; for by a little inaccuracy we may introduce confuſion inſtead of promoting perſpicuity. Several rules therefore muſt be given for the proper management of metaphors.

The firſt rule reſpecting metaphors is, they muſt be ſuited to the nature of the ſubject; neither too numerous, nor too gay, nor too elevated for it; we muſt neither attempt to force the ſubject by the uſe of them into a degree of elevation, not congruous to it; nor on the contrary ſuffer it to fall below its proper dignity. Some metaphors are beautiful in poetry, which would be unnatural in proſe; ſome are graceful in orations, which would be highly improper in hiſtorical or philoſophical compoſition. Figures are the dreſs of ſentiment. They ſhould conſequently be adapted to the ideas which they are intended to adorn.

The second rule respects the choice of objects, whence metaphors are to be drawn. The field for figurative language is very wide. All nature opens her stores and allows us to collect them without restraint. But we must beware of using such allusions as raise in the mind disagreeable, mean, low, or dirty ideas. To render a metaphor perfect, it must not only be apt, but pleasing; it must entertain as well as enlighten. Dryden therefore can hardly escape the imputation of a very unpardonable breach of delicacy, when he observes to the Earl of Dorset, that "some "bad poems carry their owners' marks about them; "some brand or other on this *buttock*, or that *ear*; "that it is notorious who are the owners of the cattle." The most pleasing metaphors are derived from the frequent occurrences of art and nature, or from the civil transactions and customs of mankind. Thus, how expressive, yet at the same time how familiar, is the image which Otway has put into the mouth of Metellus in his play of Caius Marius, where he calls Sulpicius

> That mad wild bull, whom Marius lets loose
> On each occasion, when he'd make Rome feel him,
> To toss our laws and liberties in the air.

In the third place, a metaphor should be founded on a resemblance, which is clear and striking, not far fetched, nor difficult to be discovered. Harsh or forced metaphors are always displeasing, because they perplex the reader, and instead of illustrating the thought, render it intricate and confused. Thus, for instance, Cowley, speaking of his mistress, expresses himself in the following forced and obscure verses:

Wo to her ſtubborn heart; if once mine come
Into the ſelf-ſame room,
'Twill tear and blow up all within,
Like a grenado, ſhot into a magazine.
Then ſhall love keep the aſhes and torn parts
Of both our broken hearts;
Shall out of both one new one make;
From her's the alloy, from mine the metal take;
For of her heart he from the flames will find
But little left behind;
Mine only will remain entire;
No droſs was there, to periſh in the fire.

Metaphors, borrowed from any of the ſciences, eſpecially from particular profeſſions, are almoſt always faulty by their obſcurity.

In the fourth place, we muſt never jumble metaphorical and plain language together; never conſtruct a period ſo, that part of it muſt be underſtood metaphorically, part literally; which always produces confuſion. The works of Oſſian afford an inſtance of the fault we are now cenſuring. "Trothal went forth "with the ſtream of his people, but they met a rock; "for Fingal ſtood unmoved; broken, they rolled back "from his ſide. Nor did they roll in ſafety; the "ſpear of the king purſued their flight." The metaphor at the beginning is beautiful; the "ſtream," the "unmoved rock," the "waves rolling back broken," are expreſſions in the proper and conſiſtent language of figure; but in the end, when we are told, "they did not roll in ſafety, becauſe the ſpear of the "king purſued their flight," the literal meaning is injudiciouſly mixed with the metaphor; they are at the ſame moment preſented to us as waves that *roll*, and as men that may be *purſued* and *wounded by a ſpear*,

In the fifth place, take care not to make two different metaphors meet on the ſame object. This, which is called mixed metaphor, is one of the groſſeſt abuſes of this figure. Shakeſpeare's expreſſion, for example, "to take arms againſt a ſea of troubles," makes a moſt unnatural medley, and entirely confounds the imagination. More correct writers than Shakeſpeare, are ſometimes guilty of this error. Mr. Addiſon ſays, "There is not a ſingle view of human nature, which "is not ſufficient to extinguiſh the ſeeds of pride." Here a *view* is made to *extinguiſh*, and to *extinguiſh ſeeds*.

In examining the propriety of metaphors it is a good rule to form a picture of them, and to conſider how the parts agree, and what kind of figure the whole preſents, when delineated with a pencil.

Metaphors, in the ſixth place, ſhould not be crowded together on the ſame object. Though each of them be diſtinct, yet, if they be heaped on one another, they produce confuſion. The following paſſage from Horace will exemplify this obſervation:

Motum ex Metello conſule civicum
Bellique cauſas, et vitia, et modos,
Ludumque fortunæ, graveſque
Principum amicitias, et arma
Nondum expiatis uncta cruoribus,
Periculoſæ plenum opus aleæ,
Tractas, et incedis per ignes
Suppoſitos cineri doloſo.

This paſſage, though very poetical, is rendered harſh and obſcure by three diſtinct metaphors crowded together. Firſt, "*arma uncta cruoribus nondum expiatis*;" next, "*opus plenum periculoſæ aleæ*;" and then, "*incedis per ignes ſuppoſitos cineri doloſo.*"

The laſt rule concerning metaphors is, they ſhould not be too far purſued. For, when the reſemblance, which is the foundation of the figure, is long dwelt upon, and carried into all its minute circumſtances, an allegory is produced inſtead of a metaphor; the reader is wearied, and the diſcourſe becomes obſcure. This is termed ſtraining a metaphor. Dr. Young, whoſe imagination was more diſtinguiſhed by ſtrength, than delicacy, is often guilty of running down his metaphors. Speaking of old age, he ſays, it ſhould

> Walk thoughtful on the ſilent, ſolemn ſhore
> Of that vaſt ocean, it muſt ſail ſo ſoon;
> And put good works on board; and wait the wind
> That ſhortly blows us into worlds unknown.

The two firſt lines are uncommonly beautiful; but, when he continues the metaphor by "putting good "works on board, and waiting the wind," it is ſtrained, and ſinks in dignity.

Having treated of metaphor, we ſhall conclude this chapter with a few words concerning allegory.

An allegory is a continued metaphor; as it is the repreſentation of one thing by another that reſembles it. Thus Prior makes Emma deſcribe her conſtancy to Henry in the following allegorical manner:

> Did I but purpoſe to embark with thee
> On the ſmooth ſurface of a ſummer's ſea,
> While gentle zephyrs play with proſperous gales,
> And fortune's favour fills the ſwelling ſails;
> But would forſake the ſhip, and make the ſhore,
> When the winds whiſtle, and the tempeſts roar?

The ſame rules that were given for metaphors, may be applied to allegories on account of the affinity be-

tween them. The only material difference beſide the one being ſhort and the other prolonged is, that a metaphor always explains itſelf by the words that are connected with it in their proper and literal meaning; as, when we ſay, "Achilles was a lion;" "an able "miniſter is the pillar of the ſtate." Lion and pillar are here ſufficiently interpreted by the mention of Achilles and the miniſter, which are joined to them; but an allegory may be allowed to ſtand leſs connected with the literal meaning; the interpretation not being ſo plainly pointed out, but left to our own reflection.

HYPERBOLE.

HYPERBOLE conſiſts in magnifying an object beyond its natural bounds. This figure occurs very frequently in all languages, even in common converſation. As ſwift as the wind; as white as ſnow; and our uſual forms of compliment are in general extravagant hyperboles. From habit, however, theſe exaggerated expreſſions are ſeldom conſidered, as hyperbolical.

Hyperboles are of two kinds; ſuch as are employed in deſcription, or ſuch as are ſuggeſted by paſſion. Thoſe are far beſt which are the effect of paſſion; ſince it not only gives riſe to the moſt daring figures, but often renders them juſt and natural. Hence the following paſſage in Milton, though extremely hyperbolical, contains nothing but what is natural and prop-

er. It exhibits the mind of Satan agitated by rage and despair.

> Me miserable! Which way shall I fly
> Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
> Which way I fly is hell: myself am hell:
> And in the lowest depth, a lower deep
> Still threatning to devour me, opens wide,
> To which the hell I suffer seems a heaven.

In simple description, hyperboles must be employed with more caution. When an earthquake or storm is described, or when our imagination is carried into the midst of a battle, we can bear strong hyperboles without displeasure. But, when only a woman in grief is presented to our view, it is impossible not to be disgusted with such exaggeration, as the following, in one of our dramatic poets:

> ——— I found her on the floor
> In all the storm of grief, yet beautiful,
> Pouring forth tears at such a lavish rate,
> That, were the world on fire, they might have drown'd
> The wrath of Heaven, and quench'd the mighty ruin.

This is mere bombast. The person herself who laboured under the distracting agitations of grief, might be permitted to express herself in strong hyperbole; but the spectator, who describes her, cannot be allowed equal liberty. The just boundary of this figure cannot be ascertained by any precise rule. Good sense and an accurate taste must ascertain the limit, beyond which, if it pass, it becomes extravagant.

PERSONIFICATION AND APOSTROPHE.

WE proceed now to thoſe figures which lie altogether in the thought, the words being taken in their common and literal ſenſe. We ſhall begin with perſonification, by which life and action are attributed to inanimate objects. All poetry, even in its moſt humble form, abounds in this figure. From proſe it is far from being excluded; nay, even in common converſation, frequent approaches are made to it. When we ſay, the earth *thirſts* for rain, or the fields *ſmile* with plenty; when ambition is ſaid to be *reſtleſs*, or a diſeaſe to be *deceitful*; ſuch expreſſions ſhow the facility with which the mind can accommodate the properties of living creatures to things inanimate, or abſtract conceptions.

There are three different degrees of this figure; which it is requiſite to diſtinguiſh, in order to determine the propriety of its uſe. The firſt is, when ſome of the properties of living creatures are aſcribed to inanimate objects; the ſecond, when thoſe inanimate objects are deſcribed as acting like ſuch as have life; and the third, when they are exhibited either as ſpeaking to us, or as liſtening to what we ſay to them.

The firſt and loweſt degree of this figure, which conſiſts in aſcribing to inanimate objects ſome of the qualities of living creatures, raiſes the ſtyle ſo little, that the humbleſt diſcourſe admits it without any force. Thus "a raging ſtorm, a deceitful diſeaſe, a "cruel diſaſter," are familiar expreſſions. This in-

deed is so obscure a degree of personification, that it might perhaps be properly classed with simple metaphors which almost escape our observation.

The second degree of this figure is, when we represent inanimate objects acting like those that have life. Here we rise a step higher, and the personification becomes sensible. According to the nature of the action which we ascribe to those inanimate objects, and to the particularity with which we describe it, is the strength of the figure. When pursued to a considerable length, it belongs only to studied harangues; when slightly touched, it may be admitted into less elevated compositions. Cicero, for example, speaking of the cases where killing a man is lawful in self-defence, uses the following expressions: "*Aliquando nobis gladius ad occidendum hominem ab ipsius porrigitur legibus.*" Here the laws are beautifully personified as reaching forth their hand to give us a sword for putting a man to death.

In poetry, personifications of this kind are extremely frequent, and are indeed the life and soul of it. In the descriptions of a poet, who has a lively fancy, every thing is animated. Homer, the father of poetry, is remarkable for the use of this figure. War, peace, darts, rivers, every thing in short, is alive in his writings. The same is true of Milton and Shakespeare. No personification is more striking, or introduced on a more proper occasion, than the following of Milton upon Eve's eating the forbidden fruit:

> So saying, her rash hand in evil hour
> Forth reaching to the fruit, she pluck'd, she ate!
> Earth felt the wound; and nature from her seat,
> Sighing thro' all her works, gave signs of wo,
> That all was lost.

The third and higheſt degree of this figure is yet to be mentioned; when inanimate objects are repreſented, not only as feeling and acting, but as ſpeaking to us, or liſtening, while we addreſs them. This is the boldeſt of all rhetorical figures; it is the ſtyle of ſtrong paſſion only; and therefore ſhould never be attempted, except when the mind is conſiderably heated and agitated. Milton affords a very beautiful example of this figure in that moving and tender addreſs which Eve makes to Paradiſe immediately before ſhe is compelled to leave it.

Oh, unexpected ſtroke, worſe than of death!
Muſt I thus leave thee, Paradiſe? Thus leave
Thee, native ſoil; theſe happy walks and ſhades,
Fit haunt of gods; where I had hope to ſpend
Quiet, though ſad, the reſpite of that day,
Which muſt be mortal to us both? O flowers!
That never will in other climate grow,
My early viſitation, and my laſt
At even, which I bred up with tender hand
From your firſt opening buds, and gave you names:
Who now ſhall rear you to the ſun, or rank
Your tribes, and water from the ambroſial fount?

This is the real language of nature and of female paſſion.

In the management of this ſort of perſonification two rules are to be obſerved. Firſt, never attempt it, unleſs prompted by ſtrong paſſion, and never continue it when the paſſion begins to ſubſide. The ſecond rule is, never perſonify an object which has not ſome dignity in itſelf, and which is incapable of making a proper figure in the elevation to which we raiſe it. To addreſs the body of a deceaſed friend is natural; but to addreſs the clothes which he wore, introduces low

and degrading ideas. So likewiſe, addreſſing the ſeveral parts of the body, as if they were animated, is not agreeable to the dignity of paſſion. For this reaſon the following paſſage in Pope's Eloiſa to Abelard is liable to cenſure.

> Dear fatal name! reſt ever unreveal'd,
> Nor paſs theſe lips, in holy ſilence ſeal'd.
> Hide it, my heart, within that cloſe diſguiſe,
> Where, mix'd with God's, his lov'd idea lies;
> O, write it not, my hand!—his name appears
> Already written—blot it out, my tears.

Here the name of Abelard is firſt perſonified; which, as the name of a perſon often ſtands for the perſon himſelf, is expoſed to no objection. Next, Eloiſa perſonifies her own heart; and, as the heart is a dignified part of the human frame, and is often put for the mind, this alſo may paſs without cenſure. But, when ſhe addreſſes her hand, and tells it not to write his name, this is forced and unnatural. Yet the figure becomes ſtill worſe, when ſhe exhorts her tears to blot out what her hand had written. The two laſt lines are indeed altogether unſuitable to the tenderneſs which breathes through the reſt of that inimitable poem.

APOSTROPHE is an addreſs to a real perſon; but one who is either abſent or dead, as if he were preſent, and liſtening to us. This figure is in boldneſs a degree lower than perſonification; ſince it requires leſs effort of imagination to ſuppoſe perſons preſent who are dead or abſent, than to animate inſenſible beings, and direct our diſcourſe to them. The poems of Oſſian abound in beautiful inſtances of this figure.

" Weep on the rocks of roaring winds, O Maid of " Iniſtore. Bend thy fair head over the waves, thou " fairer than the ghoſt of the hills, when it moves in a " ſun-beam at noon over the ſilence of Morven. He is " fallen! Thy youth is low; pale beneath the ſword " of Cuchullin."

COMPARISON, ANTITHESIS, INTERROGATION, EXCLAMATION, AND OTHER FIGURES OF SPEECH.

A COMPARISON or ſimile is, when the reſemblance between two objects is expreſſed in form, and uſually purſued more fully than the nature of a metaphor admits. As when we ſay, " The actions of " princes are like thoſe great rivers, the courſe of " which every one beholds, but their ſprings have been " ſeen by few." This ſhort inſtance will ſhow that a happy compariſon is a ſort of ſparkling ornament which adds luſtre and beauty to diſcourſe.

All compariſons may be reduced under two heads; *explaining* and *embelliſhing* compariſons. For, when a writer compares an object with any other thing, it always is, or ought to be, with a view to make us underſtand that object more clearly, or to render it more pleaſing. Even abſtract reaſoning admits explaining compariſons. For inſtance, the diſtinction between the powers of ſenſe and imagination is in Mr. Harris's Hermes illuſtrated by a ſimile: " As wax," ſays he, " would not be adequate to the purpoſe of ſignature, " if it had not the power to retain as well as to re-

" ceive the impreſſion ; the ſame holds of the ſoul " with reſpect to ſenſe and imagination. Senſe is its " receptive power, and imagination its retentive. Had " it ſenſe without imagination, it would not be as wax, " but as water ; where, though all impreſſions be in- " ſtantly made, yet as ſoon as they are made, they are " loſt." In compariſons of this kind, perſpicuity and uſefulneſs are chiefly to be ſtudied.

But embelliſhing compariſons are thoſe which moſt frequently occur. Reſemblance, it has been obſerved, is the foundation of this figure. Yet reſemblance muſt not be taken in too ſtrict a ſenſe for actual ſimilitude. Two objects may raiſe a train of concordant ideas in the mind, though they reſemble each other, ſtrictly ſpeaking, in nothing. For example, to deſcribe the nature of ſoft and melancholy muſic, Oſſian ſays, " The muſic of Carryl was, like the " memory of joys that are paſt, pleaſant and mourn- " ful to the ſoul." This is happy and delicate ; yet no kind of muſic bears any reſemblance to the memory of paſt joys.

We ſhall now conſider when compariſons may be introduced with propriety. Since they are the language of imagination, rather than of paſſion, an author can hardly commit a greater fault, than in the midſt of paſſion to introduce a ſimile. Our writers of tragedies often err in this reſpect. Thus Addiſon in his Cato makes Portius, juſt after Lucia had bid him farewell forever, expreſs himſelf in a ſtudied compariſon.

Thus o'er the dying lamp the unſteady flame
Hangs quivering on a point, leaps off by fits,
And falls again, as loth to quit its hold.
Thou muſt not go ; my ſoul ſtill hovers o'er thee,
And can't get looſe.

As compariſon is not the ſtyle of ſtrong paſſion, ſo, when deſigned for embelliſhment, it is not the language of a mind totally unmoved. Being a figure of dignity, it always requires ſome elevation in the ſubject, to make it proper. It ſuppoſes the imagination to be enlivened, though the heart is not agitated by paſſion. The language of ſimile lies in the middle region between the highly pathetic and the very humble ſtyle. It is however a ſparkling ornament; and muſt conſequently dazzle and fatigue, if it recur too often. Similes even in poetry ſhould be employed with moderation; but in proſe much more ſo; otherwiſe the ſtyle will become diſguſtingly luſcious, and the ornament loſe its beauty and effect.

We ſhall now conſider the nature of thoſe objects from which compariſons ſhould be drawn.

In the firſt place, they muſt not be drawn from things which have too near and obvious a reſemblance of the object with which they are compared. The pleaſure we receive from the act of comparing, ariſes from the diſcovery of likeneſſes among things of different ſpecies, where we ſhould not at firſt ſight expect a reſemblance.

But, in the ſecond place, as compariſons ought not to be founded on likeneſſes too obvious, much leſs ought they to be founded on thoſe which are too faint and diſtant. Theſe, inſtead of aſſiſting, ſtrain the fancy to comprehend them, and throw no light upon the ſubject.

In the third place, the object from which a compariſon is drawn, ought never to be an unknown object, nor one of which few people can have a clear idea. Therefore ſimiles, founded on philoſophical diſcov-

eries, or on any thing, with which perſons of a particular trade only, or a particular profeſſion, are acquainted, produce not their proper effect. They ſhould be drawn from thoſe illuſtrious and noted objects, which moſt readers have either ſeen, or can ſtrongly conceive.

In the fourth place, in compoſitions of a ſerious or elevated kind, ſimiles ſhould never be drawn from low or mean objects. Theſe degrade and vilify; whereas ſimiles are generally intended to embelliſh and dignify. Therefore, except in burleſque writings, or where an object is meant to be degraded, mean ideas ſhould never be preſented.

ANTITHESIS is founded on the contraſt or oppoſition of two objects. By contraſt, objects oppoſed to each other, appear in a ſtronger light. Beauty, for inſtance, never appears ſo charming as when contraſted with uglineſs. Antitheſis therefore may, on many occaſions, be uſed advantageouſly to ſtrengthen the impreſſion which we propoſe that any object ſhould make. Thus Cicero, in his oration for Milo, repreſenting the improbability of Milo's deſigning to take away the life of Clodius, when every thing was unfavourable to ſuch deſign, after he had omitted many opportunities of effecting ſuch a purpoſe, heightens our conviction of this improbability by a ſkilful uſe of this figure. "*Quem igitur cum omnium gratia interficere nolu-*
"*it; hunc voluit cum aliquorum querela? Quem jure,*
"*quem loco, quem tempore, quem impune, non eſt auſus:*
"*hunc injuria, iniquo loco, alieno tempore, periculo capitis,*
"*non dubitavit occidere?*" Here the antitheſis is rendered complete by the words and members of the ſentence, expreſſing the contraſted objects, being ſimilarly conſtructed, and made to correſpond with each other.

We muſt however acknowledge that frequent uſe of antitheſis, eſpecially where the oppoſition in the words is nice and quaint, is apt to make ſtyle unpleaſing. A maxim or moral ſaying very properly receives this form; becauſe it is ſuppoſed to be the effect of meditation, and is deſigned to be engraven on the memory, which recals it more eaſily by the aid of contraſted expreſſions. But, where ſeveral ſuch ſentences ſucceed each other; where this is an author's favourite and prevailing mode of expreſſion; his ſtyle is expoſed to cenſure.

INTERROGATIONS and Exclamations are paſſionate figures. The literal uſe of interrogation is to aſk a queſtion; but, when men are prompted by paſſion, whatever they would affirm, or deny with great earneſtneſs, they naturally put in the form of a queſtion; expreſſing thereby the firmeſt confidence of the truth of their own opinion; and appealing to their hearers for the impoſſibility of the contrary. Thus in ſcripture; "God is not a man, that he ſhould lie; "nor the Son of Man, that he ſhould repent. Hath "he ſaid it? And ſhall he not do it? Hath he ſpoken "it? And ſhall he not make it good?"

Interrogations may be employed in the proſecution of cloſe and earneſt reaſoning; but exclamations belong only to ſtronger emotions of the mind; to ſurpriſe, anger, joy, grief, and the like. Theſe, being natural ſigns of a moved and agitated mind, always, when properly employed, make us ſympathize with thoſe who uſe them, and enter into their feelings. Nothing, however, has a worſe effect, than frequent and unſeaſonable uſe of exclamations. Young, unexperienced writers ſuppoſe that by pouring them forth

plenteouſly they render their compoſitions warm and animated. But the contrary follows; they render them frigid to exceſs. When an author is always calling upon us to enter into tranſports, which he has ſaid nothing to inſpire, he excites our diſguſt and indignation.

Another figure of ſpeech, fit only for animated compoſition, is called VISION; when, inſtead of relating ſomething that is paſt, we uſe the preſent tenſe, and deſcribe it as if paſſing before our eyes. Thus Cicero in his fourth oration againſt Catiline; "*Vide-*
"*or enim mihi hanc urbem videre, lucem orbis terrarum*
"*atque arcem omnium gentium, ſubito uno incendia conci-*
"*dentum; cerno animo ſepulta in patria miſeros atque in-*
"*ſepultos acervos civium; verſatur mihi ante oculos aſpec-*
"*tus Cethegi, et furor, in veſtra cæde bacchantis.*" This figure has great force when it is well executed, and when it flows from genuine enthuſiaſm. Otherwiſe, it ſhares the ſame fate with all feeble attempts toward paſſionate figures; that of throwing ridicule upon the author, and leaving the reader more cool and unintereſted than he was before.

The laſt figure which we ſhall mention, and which is of frequent uſe among all public ſpeakers, is CLIMAX. It conſiſts in an artful exaggeration of all the circumſtances of ſome object or action which we wiſh to place in a ſtrong light. It operates by a gradual riſe of one circumſtance above another, till our idea is raiſed to the higheſt pitch. We ſhall give an inſtance of this figure from a printed pleading of a celebrated lawyer in a charge to the jury in the caſe of a woman, who was accuſed of murdering her own child. "Gentlemen, if one man had any how ſlain another;

" if an adverſary had killed his oppoſer; or a woman
" occaſioned the death of her enemy; even theſe crim-
" inals would have been capitally puniſhed by the
" Cornelian law. But, if this guiltleſs infant, who
" could make no enemy, had been murdered by its
" own nurſe, what puniſhments would not the mother
" have demanded? With what cries and exclamations
" would ſhe have ſtunned your ears? What ſhall we
" ſay then, when a woman, guilty of homicide; a
" mother, of the murder of her innocent child, hath
" compriſed all thoſe miſdeeds in one ſingle crime;
" a crime, in its own nature, deteſtable; in a woman
" prodigious; in a mother incredible; and perpetrated
" againſt one whoſe age called for compaſſion; whoſe
" near relation claimed affection; and whoſe inno-
" cence deſerved the higheſt favour?" Such regular climaxes, however, though they have great beauty, yet at the ſame time have the appearance of art and ſtudy; and, therefore, though they may be admitted into formal harangues, yet they are not the language of paſſion which ſeldom proceeds by ſteps ſo regular.

GENERAL CHARACTERS OF STYLE. DIFFUSE, CONCISE—FEEBLE, NERVOUS—DRY, PLAIN, NEAT, ELEGANT, FLOWERY.

THAT different ſubjects ought to be treated in different kinds of ſtyle, is a poſition ſo obvious, that it requires no illuſtration. Every one knows that treatiſes of philoſophy ſhould not be compoſed in the ſame ſtyle with orations. It is equally apparent, that

different parts of the ſame compoſition require a variation in the ſtyle. Yet amid this variety, we ſtill expect to find in the compoſitions of any one man ſome degree of uniformity in manner; we expect to find ſome prevailing character of ſtyle impreſſed on all his writings, which will mark his particular genius and turn of mind. The orations in Livy differ conſiderably in ſtyle, as they ought to do, from the reſt of his hiſtory. The ſame may be obſerved in thoſe of Tacitus. Yet in the orations of both theſe hiſtorians, the diſtinguiſhed manner of each may be clearly traced; the ſplendid fulneſs of the one, and the ſententious brevity of the other. Wherever this is real genius, it prompts to one kind of ſtyle, rather than to another. Where this is wanting; where there is no marked nor peculiar character in the compoſitions of an author; we are apt to conclude, and not without cauſe, that he is a vulgar and trivial author, who writes from imitation, and not from the impulſe of genius.

One of the firſt and moſt obvious diſtinctions in ſtyle ariſes from an author's expanding his thoughts more or leſs. This diſtinction forms what are termed the diffuſe or conciſe ſtyles. A conciſe writer compreſſes his ideas into the feweſt words; he employs none but the moſt expreſſive; he lops off all thoſe which are not a material addition to the ſenſe. Whatever ornament he admits, is adopted for the ſake of force, rather than of grace. The ſame thought is never repeated. The utmoſt preciſion is ſtudied in his ſentences; and they are generally deſigned to ſuggeſt more to the reader's imagination than they expreſs.

A diffuſe writer unfolds his idea fully. He places it in a variety of lights, and gives the reader every poſſible aſſiſtance for underſtanding it completely. He is not very anxious to expreſs it at firſt in its full ſtrength, becauſe he intends repeating the impreſſion; and, what he wants in ſtrength, he endeavours to ſupply by copiouſneſs. His periods naturally flow into ſome length, and, having room for ornament of every kind, he gives it free admittance.

Each of theſe ſtyles has its peculiar advantages; and each becomes faulty, when carried to the extreme. Of conciſeneſs, carried as far as propriety will allow, perhaps in ſome caſes farther, Tacitus the hiſtorian and Monteſquieu in "l'Eſprit de Loix" are remarkable examples. Of a beautiful and magnificent diffuſeneſs, Cicero is undoubtedly the nobleſt inſtance which can be given. Addiſon alſo and Sir William Temple may be ranked in the ſame claſs.

In determining when to adopt the conciſe, and when the diffuſe manner, we muſt be guided by the nature of the compoſition. Diſcourſes that are to be ſpoken, require a more diffuſe ſtyle than books which are to be read. In written compoſitions a proper degree of conciſeneſs has great advantages. It is more lively; keeps up attention; makes a ſtronger impreſſion on the mind; and gratifies the reader by ſupplying more exerciſe to his thoughts. Deſcription, when we wiſh to have it vivid and animated, ſhould be conciſe. Any redundant words or circumſtances encumber the fancy, and render the object we preſent to it, confuſed and indiſtinct. The ſtrength and vivacity of deſcription, whether in proſe or poetry, depend much more upon a happy choice of one or two important circumſtances,

than upon the multiplication of them. When we desire to strike the fancy, or to move the heart, we should be concise; when to inform the understanding, which is more deliberate in its motions, and wants the assistance of a guide, it is better to be full. Historical narration may be beautiful either in a concise or diffuse manner, according to the author's genius. Livy and Herodotus are diffuse; Thucydides and Sallust are concise; yet they are all agreeable.

The nervous and the feeble are generally considered as characters of style of the same import with the concise and the diffuse. Indeed they frequently coincide; yet this does not always hold; since there are instances of writers, who, in the midst of a full and ample style, have maintained a considerable degree of strength. Livy is an instance of the truth of this observation. The foundation of a nervous or weak style is laid in an author's manner of thinking. If he conceive an object strongly, he will express it with energy; but, if he have an indistinct view of his subject, it will clearly appear in his style. Unmeaning words and loose epithets will escape him; his expressions will be vague and general; his arrangements indistinct; and our conception of his meaning will be faint and confused. But a nervous writer, be his style concise or extended, gives us always a strong idea of his meaning. His mind being full of his subject, his words are always expressive; every phrase and every figure renders the picture which he would set before us, more striking and complete.

It must, however, be observed, that too great study of strength is apt to betray writers into a harsh manner. Harshness proceeds from uncommon words, from forced inversions in the construction of a sentence, and

from neglect of ſmoothneſs and eaſe. This is reckoned the fault of ſome of our earlieſt claſſics; ſuch as Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Francis Bacon, Hooker, Herrington, Cudworth, and other writers of conſiderable reputation in the days of Queen Elizabeth, James I. and Charles I. Theſe writers had nerves and ſtrength in a high degree; and are to this day diſtinguiſhed by this quality in ſtyle. But the language in their hands was very different from what it is now, and was indeed entirely formed upon the idiom and conſtruction of the Latin in the arrangement of ſentences. The preſent form of our language has in ſome degree ſacrificed the ſtudy of ſtrength to that of eaſe and perſpicuity. Our arrangement is leſs forcible, but more plain and natural; and this is now conſidered as the genius of our tongue.

Hitherto ſtyle has been conſidered under thoſe characters which regard its expreſſiveneſs of an author's meaning. We ſhall now conſider it with reſpect to the degree of ornament employed to embelliſh it. Here the ſtyle of different authors ſeems to riſe in the following gradation; a dry, a plain, a neat, an elegant, a flowery manner.

A dry manner excludes every kind of ornament. Content with being underſtood, it aims not to pleaſe either the fancy or the ear. This is tolerable only in pure didactic writing; and even there, to make us bear it, great ſolidity of matter and entire perſpicuity of language are required.

A plain ſtyle riſes one degree above a dry one. A writer of this character employs very little ornament of any kind, and reſts almoſt entirely upon his ſenſe. But, though he does not engage us by the arts

of compoſition, he avoids diſguſting us like a dry and a harſh writer. Beſide perſpicuity, he obſerves propriety, purity, and preciſion in his language, which form no inconſiderable degree of beauty. Livelineſs and force are alſo compatible with a plain ſtyle; and therefore ſuch an author, if his ſentiments be good, may be ſufficiently agreeable. The difference between a dry and a plain writer is this; the former is incapable of ornament; the latter goes not in purſuit of it. Of thoſe who have employed the plain ſtyle, Dean Swift is an eminent example.

A neat ſtyle is next in order; and here we are advanced into the region of ornament; but not of the moſt ſparkling kind. A writer of this character ſhows by his attention to the choice of words, and to their graceful collocation, that he does not deſpiſe the beauty of language. His ſentences are always free from the incumbrance of ſuperfluous words; of a moderate length; inclining rather to brevity, than a ſwelling ſtructure; and cloſing with propriety. There is variety in his cadence; but no appearance of ſtudied harmony. His figures, if he uſe any, are ſhort and accurate, rather than bold and glowing. Such a ſtyle may be attained by a writer, whoſe powers of fancy or genius are not great, by induſtry and attention. This ſort of ſtyle is not unſuitable to any ſubject whatever. A familiar epiſtle, or a law paper on the drieſt ſubject, may be written with neatneſs; and a ſermon, or a philoſophical treatiſe in a neat ſtyle, is read with ſatisfaction.

An elegant ſtyle implies a higher degree of ornament than a neat one; poſſeſſing all the virtues of ornament without any of its exceſſes or defects. Complete elegance implies great perſpicuity and propriety;

purity in the choice of words; and care and skill in their arrangement. It implies farther the beauties of imagination spread over style as far as the subject permits; and all the illustration which figurative language adds, when properly employed. An elegant writer in short, is one who delights the fancy and the ear, while he informs the understanding; who clothes his ideas in all the beauty of expression, but does not overload them with any of its misplaced finery.

A florid style implies excess of ornament. In a young composer it is not only pardonable, but often a promising symptom. But, although it may be allowed to youth in their first essays, it must not receive the same indulgence from writers of more experience. In them judgment should chasten imagination, and reject every ornament which is unsuitable or redundant. That tinsel splendor of language which some writers perpetually affect, is truly contemptible. With such it is a luxuriancy of words, not of fancy. They forget that unless founded on good sense and solid thought, the most florid style is but a childish imposition on the public.

STYLE. SIMPLE, AFFECTED, VEHEMENT. DIRECTIONS FOR FORMING A PROPER STYLE.

SIMPLICITY, applied to writing, is a term very commonly used; but, like many other critical terms, often used without precision. The different meanings of the word simplicity are the chief cause of this inaccuracy. It is therefore necessary to show,

in what ſenſe ſimplicity is a proper attribute of ſtyle. There are four different acceptations, in which this term is taken.

The firſt is ſimplicity of compoſition, as oppoſed to too great a variety of parts. This is the ſimplicity of plan in tragedy, as diſtinguiſhed from double plots and crowded incidents; the ſimplicity of the Iliad in oppoſition to the digreſſions of Lucan; the ſimplicity of Grecian architecture in oppoſition to the irregular variety of the Gothic. Simplicity in this ſenſe is the ſame with unity.

The ſecond ſenſe is ſimplicity of thought in oppoſition to refinement. Simple thoughts are thoſe which flow naturally; which are ſuggeſted by the ſubject or occaſion; and which, when once ſuggeſted, are eaſily underſtood by all. Refinement in writing means a leſs obvious and natural train of thought, which, when carried too far, approaches to intricacy, and diſpleaſes us by the appearance of being far ſought. Thus Parnell is a poet of much greater ſimplicity in his turn of thought than Cowley. In theſe two ſenſes ſimplicity has no relation to ſtyle.

The third ſenſe of ſimplicity regards ſtyle, and is oppoſed to too much ornament, or pomp of language. Thus we ſay Mr. Locke is a ſimple, Mr. Harvey a florid writer. A ſimple ſtyle, in this ſenſe; coincides with a plain or neat ſtyle.

The fourth ſenſe of ſimplicity alſo reſpects ſtyle; but it regards not ſo much the degree of ornament employed, as the eaſy and natural manner, in which our language expreſſes our thoughts. In this ſenſe ſimplicity is compatible with the higheſt ornament. Homer, for example, poſſeſſes this ſimplicity in the

greateſt perfection ; and yet no writer has more ornament and beauty. This ſimplicity is oppoſed not to ornament, but to affectation of ornament ; and is a ſuperior excellence in compoſition.

A ſimple writer has no marks of art in his expreſſion ; it appears the very language of nature. We ſee not the writer and his labour, but the man in his own natural character. He may be rich in expreſſion ; he may be full of figures and of fancy ; but theſe flow from him without effort ; and he ſeems to write in this manner, not becauſe he had ſtudied it, but becauſe it is the mode of expreſſion moſt natural to him. With this character of ſtyle a certain degree of negligence is not inconſiſtent ; for too accurate an attention to words is foreign to it. Simplicity of ſtyle, like ſimplicity of manners, ſhows a man's ſentiments and turn of mind without diſguiſe. A more ſtudied and artificial mode of writing, however beautiful, has always this diſadvantage, that it exhibits an author in form, like a man at court, where ſplendor of dreſs and the ceremonial of behaviour conceal thoſe peculiarities which diſtinguiſh one man from another. But reading an author of ſimplicity is like converſing with a perſon of rank at home and with eaſe, where we ſee his natural manners and his real character.

With regard to ſimplicity in general, we may obſerve, that the ancient original writers are always moſt eminent for it. This proceeds from a very obvious cauſe ; they wrote from the dictates of genius, and were not formed upon the labours and writings of others.

Of affectation, which is oppoſed to ſimplicity of ſtyle, we have a remarkable example in Lord Shafteſbury.

Though an author of conſiderable merit, he expreſſes nothing with ſimplicity. He ſeems to have thought it vulgar, and beneath the dignity of a man of quality, to ſpeak like other men. Hence he is ever in buſkins; full of circumlocutions and artificial elegance. In every ſentence we ſee marks of labour and art; nothing of that eaſe which expreſſes a ſentiment coming natural and warm from the heart. He abounds with figures and ornament of every kind; is ſometimes happy in them; but his fondneſs for them is too viſible; and, having once ſeized ſome metaphor or alluſion, that pleaſed him, he knows not how to part with it. He poſſeſſed delicacy and refinement of taſte in a degree that may be called exceſſive and ſickly; but he had little warmth of paſſion; and the coldneſs of his character ſuggeſted that artificial and ſtately manner which appears in his writings. No author is more dangerous to the tribe of imitators than Shafteſbury; who, amid ſeveral very conſiderable blemiſhes, has many dazzling and impoſing beauties.

It is very poſſible however for an author to write with ſimplicity, and yet without beauty. He may be free from affectation, and not have merit. Beautiful ſimplicity ſuppoſes an author to poſſeſs real genius; and to write with ſolidity, purity, and brilliancy of imagination. In this caſe, the ſimplicity of his manner is the crowning ornament; it heightens every other beauty; it is the dreſs of nature, without which all beauties are imperfect. But, if mere abſence of affectation were ſufficient to conſtitute beauty of ſtyle, weak and dull writers might often lay claim to it. A diſtinction therefore muſt be made between that

ſimplicity which accompanies true genius and is entirely compatible with every proper ornament of ſtyle, and that which is the effect of careleſſneſs.

Another character of ſtyle, different from thoſe already mentioned, is vehemence. This always implies ſtrength; and is not in any reſpect incompatible with ſimplicity. It is diſtinguiſhed by a peculiar ardour; it is the language of a man whoſe imagination and paſſions are glowing and impetuous; who, neglecting inferior graces, pours himſelf forth with the rapidity and fulneſs of a torrent. This belongs to the higher kinds of oratory; and is rather expected from a man who is ſpeaking, than from one who is writing in his cloſet. Demoſthenes is the moſt full and perfect example of this kind of ſtyle.

Having explained the different characters of ſtyle, we ſhall conclude our obſervations with a few directions for attaining a good ſtyle in general.

The firſt direction is, ſtudy clear ideas of the ſubject on which you are to write or ſpeak. What we conceive clearly and feel ſtrongly, we naturally expreſs with clearneſs and ſtrength. We ſhould therefore think cloſely on the ſubject, till we have attained a full and diſtinct view of the matter which we are to clothe in words; till we become warm and intereſted in it; then, and then only, ſhall we find expreſſion begin to flow.

Secondly, to the acquiſition of a good ſtyle, frequency of compoſing is indiſpenſably neceſſary. But it is not every kind of compoſing that will improve ſtyle. By a careleſs and haſty habit of writing, a bad ſtyle will be acquired; more trouble will afterward be neceſſary to unlearn faults, than to become acquainted with

the rudiments of compoſition. In the beginning therefore we ought to write ſlowly and with much care. Facility and ſpeed are the fruit of practice. We muſt be cautious, however, not to retard the courſe of thought, nor cool the ardour of imagination, by pauſing too long on every word. On certain occaſions a glow of compoſition muſt be kept up, if we hope to expreſs ourſelves happily, though at the expenſe of ſome inaccuracies. A more ſevere examination muſt be the work of correction. What we have written ſhould be laid by ſome time, till the ardour of compoſition be paſt; till partiality for our expreſſions be weakened, and the expreſſions themſelves be forgotten; and then, reviewing our work with a cool and critical eye, as if it were the performance of another, we ſhall diſcover many imperfections which at firſt eſcaped us.

Thirdly, acquaintance with the ſtyle of the beſt authors is peculiarly requiſite. Hence a juſt taſte will be formed, and a copious fund of words ſupplied on every ſubject. No exerciſe perhaps will be found more uſeful for acquiring a proper ſtyle, that tranſlating ſome paſſage from an eminent author into our own words. Thus to take, for inſtance, a page of one of Addiſon's Spectators, and read it attentively two or three times, till we are in full poſſeſſion of the thoughts it contains; then to lay aſide the book; to endeavour to write out the paſſage from memory as well as we can; and then to compare what we have written with the ſtyle of the author. Such an exerciſe will ſhew us our defects; will teach us to correct them; and, from the variety of expreſſion which it will exhibit, will conduct us to that which is moſt beautiful.

Fourthly, caution must be used against servile imitation of any author whatever. Desire of imitating, hampers genius, and generally produces stiffness of expression. They who follow an author closely, commonly copy his faults as well as his beauties. No one will ever become a good writer or speaker, who has not some confidence in his own genius. We ought carefully to avoid using any author's peculiar phrases, and of transcribing passages from him. Such a habit will be fatal to all genuine composition. It is much better to have something of our own, though of moderate beauty, than to shine in borrowed ornaments, which will at last betray the poverty of our genius.

Fifthly, always adapt your style to the subject, and likewise to the capacity of your hearers, if you are to speak in public. To attempt a poetical style, when it should be our business only to reason, is in the highest degree awkward and absurd. To speak with elaborate pomp of words before those who cannot comprehend them, is equally ridiculous. When we are to write or speak, we should previously fix in our minds a clear idea of the end aimed at; keep this steadily in view, and adapt our style to it.

Lastly, let not attention to style engross us so much as to prevent a higher degree of attention to the thoughts. This rule is more necessary, since the present taste of the age is directed more to style than to thought. It is much more easy to dress up trifling and common thoughts with some beauty of expression, than to afford a fund of vigorous, ingenious, and useful sentiments. The latter requires genius; the former may be attained by industry. Hence the crowd of writers who are rich in style, but poor in sentiment.

Cuſtom obliges us to be attentive to the ornaments of ſtyle, if we wiſh our labours to be read and admired. But he is a contemptible writer, who looks not beyond the dreſs of language; who lays not the chief ſtreſs upon his matter, and employs not ſuch ornaments of ſtyle to recommend it, as are manly, not foppiſh.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF MR. ADDISON'S STYLE IN No. 411 OF THE SPECTATOR.

HAVING fully inſiſted on the ſubject of language, we ſhall now commence a critical analyſis of the ſtyle of ſome good author. This will ſuggeſt obſervations, which we have not hitherto had occaſion to make, and will ſhow in a practical light the uſe of thoſe which have been made.

Mr. Addiſon, though one of the moſt beautiful writers in our language, is not the moſt correct; a circumſtance which makes his compoſition a proper ſubject of criticiſm. We proceed therefore to examine No. 411, the firſt of his celebrated eſſays on the pleaſures of the imagination in the ſixth volume of the Spectator. It begins thus:

Our ſight is the moſt perfect, and moſt delightful of all our ſenſes.

This ſentence is clear, preciſe and ſimple. The author in a few plain words lays down the propoſition, which he is going to illuſtrate. A firſt ſentence ſhould ſeldom be long, and never intricate.

He might have ſaid, *our ſight is the moſt perfect and the moſt delightful.* But in omitting to repeat the par-

ticle *the*, he has been more judicious ; for, as between *perfect* and *delightful* there is no contraſt, ſuch a repetition is unneceſſary. He proceeds :

It fills the mind with the largeſt variety of ideas, converſes with its objects at the greateſt diſtance, and continues the longeſt in action, without being tired or ſatiated with its proper enjoyments.

This ſentence is remarkably harmonious, and well conſtructed. It is entirely perſpicuous. It is loaded with no unneceſſary words. That quality of a good ſentence, which we termed its unity, is here perfectly preſerved. The members of it alſo grow, and riſe above each other in ſound, till it is conducted to one of the moſt harmonious cloſes which our language admits. It is moreover figurative without being too much ſo for the ſubject. There is no fault in it whatever, except this, the epithet *large*, which he applies to *variety*, is more commonly applied to extent than to number. It is plain, however, that he employed it to avoid the repetition of the word *great*, which occurs immediately afterward.

The ſenſe of feeling can, indeed, give us a notion of extenſion, ſhape, and all other ideas that enter at the eye, except colours ; but, at the ſame time, it is very much ſtraitened and confined in its operations, to the number, bulk, and diſtance of its particular objects. But is not every ſenſe confined as much as the ſenſe of feeling, to the number, bulk, and diſtance of its own objects? The turn of expreſſion is alſo very inaccurate, requiring the two words, *with regard*, to be inſerted after the word *operations*, in order to make the ſenſe clear and intelligible. The epithet *particular* ſeems to be uſed inſtead of *peculiar* ; but theſe words, though often

confounded, are of very different import. *Particular* is oppoſed to *general*; *peculiar* ſtands oppoſed to what is poſſeſſed in *common with others.*

Our ſight ſeems deſigned to ſupply all theſe defects, and may be conſidered as a more delicate and diffuſive kind of touch that ſpreads itſelf over an infinite multitude of bodies, comprehends the largeſt figures, and brings into our reach ſome of the moſt remote parts of the univerſe.

This ſentence is perſpicuous, graceful, well arranged, and highly muſical. Its conſtruction is ſo ſimilar to that of the ſecond ſentence, that, had it immediately ſucceeded it, the ear would have been ſenſible of a faulty monotony. But the interpoſition of a period prevents this effect.

It is this ſenſe which furniſhes the imagination with its ideas; ſo that, by the pleaſures of the imagination or fancy, (which I ſhall uſe promiſcuouſly) I here mean ſuch as ariſe from viſible objects, either when we have them actually in our view, or when we call up their ideas into our minds by paintings, ſtatues, deſcriptions, or any the like occaſion.

The parentheſis in the middle of this ſentence is not clear. It ſhould have been, *terms which I ſhall uſe promiſcuouſly*; ſince the verb *uſe* does not relate to the pleaſures of the imagination, but to the terms, *fancy* and *imagination*, which were meant to be ſynonimous. To call a painting or a ſtatue *an occaſion* is not accurate; nor is it very proper to ſpeak of *calling up ideas by occaſions.* The common phraſe *any ſuch means*, would have been more natural.

We cannot indeed have a ſingle image in the fancy, that did not make its firſt entrance through the ſight; but we have the power of retaining, altering, and compounding thoſe

images which we have once received, into all the varieties of picture and vision that are most agreeable to the imagination; for, by this faculty, a man in a dungeon is capable of entertaining himself with scenes and landscapes more beautiful than any that can be found in the whole compass of nature.

In one member of this sentence there is an inaccuracy in syntax. It is proper to say, *altering and compounding those images which we have once received, into all the varieties of picture and vision.* But we cannot with propriety say, *retaining them into all the varieties*; yet the arrangement requires this construction. This error might have been avoided by arranging the passage in the following manner: "We have the power of retaining those images which we have once received; and of altering and compounding them into all the varieties of picture and vision." The latter part of the sentence is clear and elegant.

There are few words in the English language, which are employed in a more loose and uncircumscribed sense than those of the fancy and the imagination.

Except when some assertion of consequence is advanced, these little words, *it is* and *there are*, ought to be avoided, as redundant and enfeebling. The two first words of this sentence therefore should have been omitted. The article prefixed to *fancy and imagination* ought also to have been omitted, since he does not mean the powers of *the fancy and the imagination*, but the words only. The sentence should have run thus: "Few words in the English language are employed in a more loose and uncircumscribed sense than fancy and imagination."

I therefore thought it neceſſary to fix and determine the notion of theſe two words, as I intend to make uſe of them in the thread of my following ſpeculations, that the reader may conceive rightly what is the ſubject which I proceed upon.

The words *fix* and *determine*, though they may appear ſo, are not ſynonimous. We *fix* what is looſe; we *determine* what is *uncircumſcribed*. They may be viewed, therefore, as applied here with peculiar delicacy.

The *notion of theſe words* is rather harſh, and is not ſo commonly uſed, as the *meaning of theſe words*. *As I intend to make uſe of them in the thread of my ſpeculations* is evidently faulty. A ſort of metaphor is improperly mixed with words in their literal ſenſe. *The ſubject which I proceed upon* is an ungraceful cloſe of a ſentence; it ſhould have been, *the ſubject upon which I proceed.*

I muſt therefore deſire him to remember, that by the pleaſures of imagination, I mean only ſuch pleaſures as ariſe originally from ſight, and that I divide theſe pleaſures into two kinds.

This ſentence begins in a manner too ſimilar to the preceding. *I mean only ſuch pleaſures*—the adverb *only* is not in its proper place. It is not intended here to qualify the verb *mean*, but *ſuch pleaſures*; and ought therefore to be placed immediately after the latter.

My deſign being, firſt of all, to diſcourſe of thoſe primary pleaſures of the imagination, which entirely proceed from ſuch objects as are before our eyes; and, in the next place, to ſpeak of thoſe ſecondary pleaſures of the imagination which flow from the ideas of viſible objects, when the objects are not actually before the eye, but are called up into our mem-

ories, or formed into agreeable visions of things, that are either absent or fictitious.

Neatness and brevity are peculiarly requisite in the division of a subject. This sentence is somewhat clogged by a tedious phraseology. *My design being, first of all, to discourse—in the next place to speak of—such objects as are before our eyes—things that are either absent or fictitious.* Several words might have been omitted, and the style made more neat and compact.

The pleasures of the imagination, taken in their full extent, are not so gross as those of sense, nor so refined as those of the understanding.

This sentence is clear and elegant.

The last are indeed more preferable, because they are founded on some new knowledge or improvement in the mind of man: yet it must be confessed, that those of the imagination are as great and as transporting as the other.

The phrase, *more preferable*, is so palpable an inaccuracy, that we wonder how it could escape the observation of Mr. Addison. The proposition, contained in the last member of this sentence, is neither clearly nor elegantly expressed. *It must be confessed, that those of the imagination are as great and as transporting as the other.* In the beginning of this sentence he had called the pleasures of the understanding *the last*; and he concludes with observing, that those of the imagination are as great and transporting as *the other*. Beside that *the other* makes not a proper contrast with *the last*, it is left doubtful whether by *the other* are meant the pleasures of the understanding, or the pleasures of sense; though without doubt it was intended to refer to the pleasures of the understanding only.

A beautiful prospect delights the soul as much as a demonstration; and a description in Homer has charmed more readers than a chapter in Aristotle.

This is a good illustration of what he had been asserting, and is expressed with that elegance, by which Mr. Addison is distinguished.

Besides, the pleasures of the imagination have this advantage above those of the understanding, that they are more obvious, and more easy to be acquired.

This sentence is unexceptionable.

It is but opening the eye, and the scene enters.

Though this is lively and picturesque, yet we must remark a small inaccuracy. A *scene* cannot be said to *enter;* an *actor* enters; but a scene *appears* or *presents itself.*

The colours paint themselves on the fancy, with very little attention of thought or application of mind in the beholder.

This is beautiful and elegant, and well suited to those pleasures of the imagination of which the author is treating.

We are struck, we know not how, with the symmetry of any thing we see; and immediately assent to the beauty of an object, without inquiring into the particular causes and occasions of it.

We *assent* to the truth of a proposition; but cannot with propriety be said to *assent to the beauty of an object.* In the conclusion, *particular* and *occasions* are superfluous words; and the pronoun *it* is in some measure ambiguous.

A man of a polite imagination is let into a great many pleasures that the vulgar are not capable of receiving.

The term *polite* is oftener applied to manners, than to the imagination. The use of *that* instead of *which*

is too common with Mr. Addiſon. Except in caſes where it is neceſſary to avoid repetition, *which* is preferable to *that*, and is undoubtedly ſo in the preſent inſtance.

He can converſe with a picture, and find an agreeable companion in a ſtatue. He meets with a ſecret refreſhment in a deſcription; and often feels a greater ſatisfaction in the proſpect of fields and meadows, than another does in the poſſeſſion. It gives him, indeed, a kind of property in every thing he ſees; and makes the moſt rude uncultivated parts of nature adminiſter to his pleaſures: ſo that he looks upon the world, as it were, in another light, and diſcovers in it a multitude of charms that conceal themſelves from the generality of mankind.

This ſentence is eaſy, flowing, and harmonious. We muſt however obſerve a ſlight inaccuracy. *It gives him a kind of property*—to this *it* there is no antecedent in the whole paragraph. To diſcover its connexion, we muſt look back to the third ſentence preceding, which begins with *a man of a polite imagination.* This phraſe, *polite imagination*, is the only antecedent to which *it* can refer; and even this is not a proper antecedent, ſince it ſtands in the genitive caſe as the qualification only of *a man.*

There are, indeed, but very few who know how to be idle and innocent, or have a reliſh of any pleaſures that are not criminal; every diverſion they take, is at the expenſe of ſome one virtue or another, and their very firſt ſtep out of buſineſs is into vice or folly.

This ſentence is truly elegant, muſical, and correct.

A man ſhould endeavour, therefore, to make the ſphere of his innocent pleaſures as wide as poſſible, that he may retire into them with ſafety, and find in them ſuch a ſatisfaction as a wiſe man would not bluſh to take.

This alſo is a good ſentence and expoſed to no objection.

Of this nature are thoſe of the imagination, which do not require ſuch a bent of thought as is neceſſary to our more ſerious employments; nor, at the ſame time, ſuffer the mind to ſink into that indolence and remiſſneſs, which are apt to accompany our more ſenſual delights; but, like a gentle exerciſe to the faculties, awaken them from ſloth and idleneſs, without putting them upon any labour or difficulty.

The beginning of this ſentence is incorrect. *Of this nature,* ſays he, *are thoſe of the imagination.* It might be aſked, of what nature? For the preceding ſentence had not deſcribed the nature of any claſs of pleaſures. He had ſaid that it was every man's duty to make the ſphere of his innocent pleaſures as extenſive, as poſſible, that within this ſphere he might find a ſafe retreat and laudable ſatisfaction. The tranſition therefore is looſely made. It would have been better, if he had ſaid, "This advantage we gain," or "this ſatisfaction we enjoy," by means of the pleaſures of the imagination. The reſt of the ſentence is correct.

We might here add, that the pleaſures of the fancy are more conducive to health than thoſe of the underſtanding, which are worked out by dint of thinking, and attended with too violent a labour of the brain.

Worked out by dint of thinking is a phraſe which borders too nearly on the ſtyle of common converſation, to be admitted into poliſhed compoſition.

Delightful ſcenes, whether in nature, painting, or poetry, have a kindly influence on the body, as well as the mind, and not only ſerve to clear and brighten the imagination,

but are able to disperse grief and melancholy, and to set the animal spirits in pleasing and agreeable motions. For this reason, Sir Francis Bacon, in his Essay upon Health, has not thought it improper to prescribe to his reader a poem or a prospect, where he particularly dissuades him from knotty and subtile disquisitions, and advises him to pursue studies that fill the mind with splendid and illustrious objects, as histories, fables, and contemplations of nature.

In the latter of these two periods a member is out of its place. *Where he particularly dissuades him from knotty and subtile disquisitions* ought to precede *has not thought it improper to prescribe, &c.*

I have in this paper, by way of introduction, settled the notion of those pleasures of the imagination, which are the subject of my present undertaking, and endeavoured, by several considerations to recommend to my readers the pursuit of those pleasures; I shall in my next paper examine the several sources from whence these pleasures are derived.

These two concluding sentences furnish examples of proper collocation of circumstances. We formerly showed that it is difficult so to dispose them, as not to embarrass the principal subject. Had the following incidental circumstances, *by way of introduction—by several considerations—in this paper—in the next paper*, been placed in any other situation, the sentence would have been neither so neat, nor so clear, as it is on the present construction.

ELOQUENCE. ORIGIN OF ELOQUENCE. GRECIAN ELOQUENCE. DEMOSTHENES.

ELOQUENCE is the art of perſuaſion. Its moſt eſſential requiſites are ſolid argument, clear method, and an appearance of ſincerity in the ſpeaker, with ſuch graces of ſtyle and utterance, as command attention. Good ſenſe muſt be its foundation. Without this, no man can be truly eloquent; ſince fools can perſuade none but fools. Before we can perſuade a man of ſenſe, we muſt convince him. Convincing and perſuading, though ſometimes confounded, are of very different import. Conviction affects the underſtanding only; perſuaſion the will and the practice. It is the buſineſs of a philoſopher to convince us of truth; it is that of an orator to perſuade us to act conformably to it by engaging our affections in its favour. Conviction is, however, one avenue to the heart; and it is that which an orator muſt firſt attempt to gain; for no perſuaſion can be ſtable, which is not founded on conviction. But the orator muſt not be ſatisfied with convincing; he muſt addreſs himſelf to the paſſions; he muſt paint to the fancy, and touch the heart. Hence, beſide ſolid argument and clear method, all the conciliating and intereſting arts of compoſition and pronunciation enter into the idea of eloquence.

Eloquence may be conſidered, as conſiſting of three kinds or degrees. The firſt and loweſt is that which aims only to pleaſe the hearers. Such in general is

the eloquence of panegyrics, inaugural orations, addreſſes to great men, and other harangues of this kind. This ornamental ſort of compoſition may innocently amuſe and entertain the mind; and may be mixed at the ſame time with very uſeful ſentiments. But it muſt be acknowledged, that, where the ſpeaker aims only to ſhine and to pleaſe, there is great danger of art being ſtrained into oſtentation, and of the compoſition becoming tireſome and inſipid.

The ſecond degree of eloquence is, when the ſpeaker aims, not merely to pleaſe, but alſo to inform, to inſtruct, to convince; when his art is employed in removing prejudices againſt himſelf and his cauſe; in ſelecting the moſt proper arguments, ſtating them with the greateſt force, arranging them in the beſt order, expreſſing and delivering them with propriety and beauty: thereby diſpoſing us to paſs that judgment, or favour that ſide of the cauſe, to which he ſeeks to bring us. Within this degree chiefly is employed the eloquence of the bar.

The third and higheſt degree of eloquence is that by which we are not only convinced, but intereſted, agitated, and carried along with the ſpeaker; our paſſions riſe with his; we ſhare all his emotions; we love, we hate, we reſent, as he inſpires us; and are prompted to reſolve, or to act, with vigour and warmth. Debate in popular aſſemblies opens the moſt extenſive field to this ſpecies of eloquence; and the pulpit alſo admits it.

This high ſpecies of eloquence is always the offſpring of paſſion. By paſſion we mean that ſtate of mind, in which it is agitated and fired by ſome object in view. Hence the univerſally acknowledged power

of enthuſiaſm in public ſpeakers for affecting their audience. Hence all ſtudied declamation and laboured ornaments of ſtyle, which ſhow the mind to be cool and unmoved, are inconſiſtent with perſuaſive eloquence. Hence every kind of affectation in geſture and pronunciation detracts ſo much from the weight of a ſpeaker. Hence the neceſſity of being, and of being believed to be, diſintereſted and in earneſt, in order to perſuade.

In tracing the origin of eloquence it is not neceſſary to go far back into the early ages of the world, or to ſearch for it among the monuments of Eaſtern or Egyptian antiquity. In thoſe ages, it is true, there was a certain kind of eloquence; but it was more nearly allied to poetry, than to what we properly call oratory. While the intercourſe of men was infrequent, and force was the principal mean employed in deciding controverſies, the arts of oratory and perſuaſion, of reaſoning and debate, could be little known. The firſt empires were of the deſpotic kind. A ſingle perſon, or at moſt a few, held the reins of government. The multitude were accuſtomed to blind obedience; they were driven, not perſuaded. Conſequently none of thoſe refinements of ſociety, which make public ſpeaking an object of importance, were introduced.

Before the riſe of the Grecian Republics we perceive no remarkable appearances of eloquence, as the art of perſuaſion; and theſe gave it ſuch a field, as it never had before, and perhaps has never had again ſince that time. Greece was divided into many little ſtates. Theſe were governed at firſt by kings; who being for their tyranny ſucceſſively expelled from their

dominions, there ſprung up a multitude of democratical governments, founded nearly upon the ſame plan, animated by the ſame high ſpirit of freedom, mutually jealous, and rivals of each other. Among theſe Athens was moſt noted for arts of every kind, but eſpecially for eloquence. We ſhall paſs over the orators, who flouriſhed in the early period of this republic, and take a view of the great Demoſthenes, in whom eloquence ſhone with unrivalled ſplendour. Not formed by nature either to pleaſe or perſuade, he ſtruggled with, and ſurmounted, the moſt formidable impediments. He ſhut himſelf up in a cave, that he might ſtudy with leſs diſtraction. He declaimed by the ſea-ſhore, that he might be uſed to the noiſe of a tumultuous aſſembly; and with pebbles in his mouth, that he might correct a defect in his ſpeech. He practiſed at home with a naked ſword hanging over his ſhoulder, that he might check an ungraceful motion, to which he was ſubject. Hence the example of this great man affords the higheſt encouragement to every ſtudent of eloquence; ſince it ſhows how far art and application availed for acquiring an excellence, which nature appeared willing to deny.

No orator had ever a finer field than Demoſthenes in his Olynthiacs and Philippics, which are his capital orations; and undoubtedly to the greatneſs of the ſubject, and to that integrity and public ſpirit, which breathe in them, they owe much of their merit. The object is to rouſe the indignation of his countrymen againſt Philip of Macedon, the public enemy of the liberties of Greece; and to guard them againſt the inſidious meaſures, by which that crafty prince endeavoured to lay them aſleep to danger. To attain this end, we

ſee him uſing every proper mean to animate a people, diſtinguiſhed by juſtice, humanity, and valour; but in many inſtances become corrupt and degenerate. He boldly accuſes them of venality, indolence, and indifference to the public cauſe; while at the ſame time he reminds them of the glory of their anceſtors, and of their preſent reſources. His cotemporary orators, who were bribed by Philip, and perſuaded the people to peace, he openly reproaches, as traitors to their country. He not only prompts to vigorous meaſures, but lays down the plan of execution. His orations are ſtrongly animated, and full of the impetuoſity and fire of public ſpirit. His compoſition is not diſtinguiſhed by ornament and ſplendour. It is energy of thought, peculiarly his own, which forms his character, and ſets him above all others. He ſeems not to attend to words, but to things. We forget the orator, and think of the ſubject. He has no parade; no ſtudied introductions; but is like a man full of his ſubject, who, after preparing his audience by a ſentence or two for hearing plain truths, enters directly on buſineſs.

The ſtyle of Demoſthenes is ſtrong and conciſe, though ſometimes harſh and abrupt. His words are very expreſſive, and his arrangement firm and manly. Negligent of little graces, he aims at that ſublime which lies in ſentiment. His action and pronunciation were uncommonly vehement and ardent. His character is of the auſtere, rather than of the gentle kind. He is always grave, ſerious, paſſionate; never degrading himſelf, nor attempting any thing like pleaſantry. If his admirable eloquence be in any reſpect faulty, it is in this, he ſometimes borders on the hard and dry. He may be thought to want ſmoothneſs and grace;

which is attributed to his imitating too closely the manner of Thucydides, who was his great model for style, and whose history he transcribed eight times with his own hand. But these defects are more than compensated by that masterly force of masculine eloquence, which, as it overpowered all who heard it, cannot in the present day be read without emotion.

ROMAN ELOQUENCE. CICERO. MODERN ELOQUENCE.

HAVING treated of eloquence among the Greeks, we now proceed to consider its progress among the Romans; where we shall find one model at least of eloquence in its most splendid form. The Romans derived their eloquence, poetry, and learning, from the Greeks; and were far inferior to them in genius for all these accomplishments. They had neither their vivacity, nor sensibility; their passions were not so easily moved, nor their conceptions so lively; in comparison with them they were a phlegmatic people. Their language resembled their character; it was regular, firm and stately; but wanted that expressive simplicity, that flexibility to suit every different species of composition, by which the Greek tongue is peculiarly distinguished. Hence we always find in Greek productions more native genius; in Roman, more regularity and art.

As the Roman government, during the republic, was of the popular kind, public speaking early became the mean of acquiring power and distinction. But in

the unpoliſhed times of the ſtate their ſpeaking hardly deſerved the name of eloquence. It was but a ſhort time before the age of Cicero, that the Roman orators roſe into any reputation. Craſſus and Antonius ſeem to have been the moſt eminent; but, as none of their works are extant, nor any of Hortenſius's, who was Cicero's rival at the bar, it is not neceſſary to tranſcribe what Cicero ſaid of them, and of the character of their eloquence.

The object, moſt worthy of our attention, is Cicero himſelf; whoſe name alone ſuggeſts every thing ſplendid in oratory. With his life and character in other reſpects we are not at preſent concerned. We ſhall view him only as an eloquent ſpeaker; and endeavour to mark both his virtues and defects. His virtues are eminently great. In all his orations art is conſpicuous. He begins commonly with a regular exordium, and with much addreſs prepoſſeſſes the hearers, and ſtudies to gain their affections. His method is clear, and his arguments arranged with great propriety. In clearneſs of method he has advantage over Demoſthenes. Every thing is in its proper place: he never attempts to move before he has endeavoured to convince; and in moving, particularly the ſofter paſſions, he is very ſucceſsful. No one ever knew the force of words better than Cicero. He rolls them along with the greateſt beauty and pomp; and in the ſtructure of his ſentences is eminently curious and exact. He is always full and flowing; never abrupt. He amplifies every thing; yet, though his manner is on the whole diffuſe, it is often happily varied, and ſuited to the ſubject. When a great public object roufed his mind, and demanded indignation and force, he departs conſiderably from

that looſe and declamatory manner, to which he at other times is addicted, and becomes very forcible and vehement.

This great orator, however, is not without defects. In moſt of his orations there is too much art. He ſeems often deſirous of obtaining admiration, rather than of operating conviction. He is ſometimes therefore ſhowy, rather than ſolid; and diffuſe, where he ought to be urgent. His periods are always round and ſonorous; they cannot be accuſed of monotony, for they poſſeſs variety of cadence; but, from too great fondneſs for magnificence, he is ſometimes deficient in ſtrength. Though the ſervices which he performed for his country, were very conſiderable, yet he is too much his own panegyriſt. Ancient manners, which impoſed fewer reſtraints on the ſide of decorum, may in ſome degree excuſe, but cannot entirely juſtify his vanity.

Whether Demoſthenes or Cicero were the moſt perfect orator is a queſtion, on which critics are not agreed. Fenelon, the celebrated Archbiſhop of Cambray, and author of Telemachus, ſeems to have ſtated their merits with great juſtice and perſpicuity. His judgment is given in his reflections on rhetoric and poetry. We ſhall tranſlate the paſſage, though not, it is feared, without loſing much of the ſpirit of the original. "I do not heſitate to declare," ſays he, "that "I think Demoſthenes ſuperior to Cicero. I am per- "ſuaded, no one can admire Cicero more than I do. "He adorns whatever he attempts. He does honour "to language. He diſpoſes of words in a manner pe- "culiar to himſelf. His ſtyle has great variety of "character. Whenever he pleaſes, he is even conciſe

" and vehement; for inſtance, againſt Catiline, againſt " Verres, againſt Anthony. But ornament is too viſi- " ble in his writings. His art is wonderful, but it is " perceived. When the orator is providing for the " ſafety of the republic, he forgets not himſelf, nor " permits others to forget him. Demoſthenes ſeems " to eſcape from himſelf, and to ſee nothing but his " country. He ſeeks not elegance of expreſſion; " unſought, he poſſeſſes it. He is ſuperior to admira- " tion. He makes uſe of language, as a modeſt man " does of dreſs, only to cover him. He thunders, " he lightens. He is a torrent which carries every " thing before it. We cannot criticiſe, becauſe we " are not ourſelves. His ſubject enchains our atten- " tion, and makes us forget his language. We loſe " him from our ſight; Philip alone occupies our " minds. I am delighted with both theſe orators; " but I confeſs that I am leſs affected by the infinite " art and magnificent eloquence of Cicero, than by " the rapid ſimplicit y of Demoſthenes."

The reign of eloquence among the Romans was very ſhort. It expired with Cicero. Nor can we wonder at this; for liberty was no more, and the government of Rome was delivered over to a ſucceſſion of the moſt execrable tyrants that ever diſgraced and ſcourged the human race.

In the decline of the Roman Empire the introduction of Chriſtianity gave riſe to a new kind of eloquence in the apologies, ſermons, and paſtoral writings of the fathers. But none of them afforded very juſt models of eloquence. Their language as ſoon as we deſcend to the third or fourth century, becomes harſh; and they are generally infected with the taſte of that age,

a love of swollen and strained thoughts, and of the play of words.

As nothing in the middle ages deserves attention, we pass now to the state of eloquence in modern times. Here it must be confessed, that in no European nation public speaking has been valued so highly, or cultivated with so much care, as in Greece or Rome. The genius of the world appears in this respect to have undergone some alteration. The two countries, where we might expect to find most of the spirit of eloquence, are France and Great Britain; France on account of the distinguished turn of its inhabitants toward all the liberal arts, and of the encouragement which more than a century past these arts have received from the public; Great Britain on account of its free government, and the liberal spirit and genius of its people. Yet in neither of these countries has oratory risen nearly to the degree of its ancient splendour.

Several reasons may be given, why modern eloquence has been so confined and humble in its efforts. In the first place, it seems, that this change must in part be ascribed to that accurate turn of thinking, which has been so much cultivated in modern times. Our public speakers are obliged to be more reserved than the ancients, in their attempts to elevate the imagination, and warm the passions; and by the influence of prevailing taste their own genius is chastened perhaps in too great a degree. It is probable also, that we ascribe to our correctness and good sense, what is chiefly owing to the phlegm and natural coldness of our disposition. For the vivacity and sensibility of the Greeks and Romans, especially of the former, seem to have been much superior to ours, and to have given them a higher relish for all the beauties of oratory.

Though the Parliament of Great Britain is the nobleſt field which Europe at preſent affords to a public ſpeaker, yet eloquence has ever been there a more feeble inſtrument than in the popular aſſemblies of Greece and Rome. Under ſome foreign reigns the iron hand of arbitrary power checked its efforts; and in later times miniſterial influence has generally rendered it of ſmall importance. At the bar our diſadvantage in compariſon with the ancients is great. Among them the judges were commonly numerous; the laws were few and ſimple; the deciſion of cauſes was left in a great meaſure to equity and the ſenſe of mankind. Hence the field for judicial eloquence was ample. But at preſent the ſyſtem of law is much more complicated. The knowledge of it is rendered ſo laborious, as to be the ſtudy of a man's life. Speaking is therefore only a ſecondary accompliſhment, for which he has little leiſure.

With reſpect to the pulpit it has been a great diſadvantage, that the practice of reading ſermons inſtead of repeating them has prevailed ſo univerſally in England. This indeed may have introduced accuracy; but eloquence has been much enfeebled. Another circumſtance too has been prejudicial. The ſectaries and fanatics before the reſtoration uſed a warm, zealous, and popular manner of preaching; and their adherents afterward continued to diſtinguiſh themſelves by ſimilar ardour. Hatred of theſe ſects drove the eſtabliſhed church into the oppoſite extreme of a ſtudied coolneſs of expreſſion. Hence from the art of perſuaſion, which preaching ought ever to be, it has paſſed in England into mere reaſoning and inſtruction.

Lo.

ELOQUENCE OF POPULAR ASSEMBLIES.

THE foundation of every ſpecies of eloquence, is good ſenſe and ſolid thought. It ſhould be the firſt ſtudy of him, who means to addreſs a popular aſſembly, to be previouſly maſter of the buſineſs on which he is to ſpeak; to be well provided with matter and argument; and to reſt upon theſe the chief ſtreſs. This will give to his diſcourſe an air of manlineſs and ſtrength, which is a powerful inſtrument of perſuaſion. Ornament, if he have genius for it, will ſucceed of courſe; at any rate it deſerves only ſecondary regard.

To become a perſuaſive ſpeaker in a popular aſſembly, it is a capital rule, that a man ſhould always be perſuaded of whatever he recommends to others. Never, if it can be avoided, ſhould he eſpouſe that ſide of an argument, which he does not believe to be the right. All high eloquence muſt be the offſpring of paſſion. This makes every man perſuaſive, and gives a force to his genius which it cannot otherwiſe poſſeſs.

Debate in popular aſſemblies ſeldom allows a ſpeaker that previous preparation which the pulpit always, and the bar ſometimes, admits. A general prejudice prevails, and not an unjuſt one, againſt ſet ſpeeches in public meetings. At the opening of a debate they may ſometimes be introduced with propriety; but, as the debate advances, they become improper; they loſe the appearance of being ſuggeſted by the buſineſs

that is going on. Study and oſtentation are apt to be viſible; and, conſequently, though admired as elegant, they are ſeldom ſo perſuaſive as more free and unconſtrained diſcourſes.

This, however, does not forbid premeditation, on what we intend to ſpeak. With reſpect to the matter we cannot be too accurate in our preparation; but with regard to words and expreſſions it is very poſſible ſo far to overdo, as to render our ſpeech ſtiff and preciſe. Short notes of the ſubſtance of the diſcourſe are not only allowable, but of conſiderable ſervice, to thoſe eſpecially, who are beginning to ſpeak in public. They will teach them a degree of accuracy, which, if they ſpeak frequently, they are in danger of loſing. They will accuſtom them to diſtinct arrangement, without which, eloquence, however great, cannot produce entire conviction.

Popular aſſemblies give ſcope for the moſt animated manner of public ſpeaking. Paſſion is eaſily excited in a great aſſembly, where the movements are communicated by mutual ſympathy between the orator and the audience. That ardour of ſpeech, that vehemence and glow of ſentiment, which proceed from a mind animated and inſpired by ſome great and public object, form the peculiar character of popular eloquence in its higheſt degree of perfection.

The warmth, however, which we expreſs, muſt be always ſuited to the ſubject; ſince it would be ridiculous to introduce great vehemence into a ſubject of ſmall importance, or which by its nature requires to be treated with calmneſs. We muſt alſo be careful not to counterfeit warmth without feeling it. The beſt rule is, to follow nature; and never to attempt a

ſtrain of eloquence which is not prompted by our own genius. A ſpeaker may acquire reputation and influence by a calm, argumentative manner. To reach the pathetic and ſublime of oratory requires thoſe ſtrong ſenſibilities of mind, and that high power of expreſſion, which are given to few.

Even when vehemence is juſtified by the ſubject, and prompted by genius; when warmth is felt, not feigned; we muſt be cautious, leſt impetuoſity tranſport us too far. If the ſpeaker loſe command of himſelf, he will ſoon loſe command of his audience. He muſt begin with moderation, and ſtudy to warm his hearers gradually and equally with himſelf. For, if their paſſions be not in uniſon with his, the diſcord will ſoon be felt. Reſpect for his audience ſhould always lay a decent reſtraint upon his warmth, and prevent it from carrying him beyond proper limits. When a ſpeaker is ſo far maſter of himſelf, as to preſerve cloſe attention to argument, and even to ſome degree of accurate expreſſion; this ſelf-command, this effort of reaſon in the midſt of paſſion, contributes in the higheſt degree both to pleaſe and to perſuade. The advantages of paſſion are afforded for the purpoſes of perſuaſion without that confuſion and diſorder which are its uſual attendants.

In the moſt animated ſtrain of popular ſpeaking we muſt always regard what the public ear will receive without diſguſt. Without attention to this, imitation of ancient orators might betray a ſpeaker into a boldneſs of manner, with which the coolneſs of modern taſte would be diſpleaſed. It is alſo neceſſary to attend with care to the decorums of time, place and character. No ardour of eloquence can atone for ne-

glect of theſe. No one ſhould attempt to ſpeak in public without forming to himſelf a juſt and ſtrict idea of what is ſuitable to his age and character; what is ſuitable to the ſubject, the hearers, the place, and the occaſion. On this idea he ſhould adjuſt the whole train and manner of his ſpeaking.

What degree of conciſeneſs or diffuſeneſs is ſuited to popular eloquence, it is not eaſy to determine with preciſion. A diffuſe manner is generally conſidered as moſt proper. There is danger, however, of erring in this reſpect; by too diffuſe a ſtyle public ſpeakers often loſe more in point of ſtrength, than they gain by fulneſs of illuſtration. Exceſſive conciſeneſs indeed muſt be avoided. We muſt explain and inculcate; but confine ourſelves within certain limits. We ſhould never forget that, however we may be pleaſed with hearing ourſelves ſpeak, every audience may be tired; and the moment they grow weary, our eloquence becomes uſeleſs. It is better, in general, to ſay too little, than too much; to place our thought in one ſtrong point of view, and reſt it there, than by ſhowing it in every light, and pouring forth a profuſion of words upon it, to exhauſt the attention of our hearers, and leave them languid and fatigued.

ELOQUENCE OF THE BAR.

THE ends of ſpeaking at the bar and in popular aſſemblies are commonly different. In the latter the orator aims principally to perſuade; to determine

his hearers to ſome choice or conduct, as good, fit, or uſeful. He, therefore, applies himſelf to every principle of action in our nature; to the paſſions and to the heart, as well as to the underſtanding. But at the bar conviction is the principal object. There the ſpeaker's duty is not to perſuade the judges to what is good or uſeful, but to exhibit what is juſt and true; and conſequently his eloquence is chiefly addreſſed to the underſtanding.

At the bar ſpeakers addreſs themſelves to one, or to a few judges, who are generally perſons of age, gravity, and dignity of character. There thoſe advantages which a mixed and numerous aſſembly affords for employing all the arts of ſpeech, are not enjoyed. Paſſion does not riſe ſo eaſily. The ſpeaker is heard with more coolneſs; he is watched with more ſeverity; and would expoſe himſelf to ridicule by attempting that high and vehement tone, which is ſuited only to a multitude. Beſide at the bar, the field of ſpeaking is confined within law and ſtatute. Imagination is fettered. The advocate has always before him the line, the ſquare, and the compaſs. Theſe it is his chief buſineſs to be conſtantly applying to the ſubjects under debate.

Hence the eloquence of the bar is of a much more limited, more ſober, and chaſtiſed kind, than that of popular aſſemblies; and conſequently the judicial orations of the ancients muſt not be conſidered as exact models of that kind of ſpeaking which is adapted to the preſent ſtate of the bar. With them ſtrict law was much leſs an object of attention, than it is with us. In the days of Demoſthenes and Cicero the municipal ſtatutes were few, ſimple and general;

and the decision of causes was left in a great measure to the equity and common sense of the judges. Eloquence, rather than jurisprudence, was the study of pleaders. Cicero says that three months' study would make a complete civilian; nay, it was thought that a man might be a good pleader without any previous study. Among the Romans there was a set of men, called *Pragmatici*, whose office it was to supply the orator with all the law knowledge his cause required; which he disposed in that popular form, and decorated with those colours of eloquence which were most fitted for influencing the judges.

It may also be observed, that the civil and criminal judges in Greece and Rome were more numerous than with us, and formed a kind of popular assembly. The celebrated tribunal of the Areopagus at Athens consisted of fifty judges at least. In Rome the *Judices Selecti* were always numerous, and had the office and power of judge and jury. In the famous cause of Milo, Cicero spoke to fifty-one *Judices Selecti*, and thus had the advantage of addressing his whole pleading, not to one or a few learned judges of the point of law, as is the case with us, but to an assembly of Roman citizens. Hence those arts of popular eloquence, which he employed with such success. Hence certain practices, which would be reckoned theatrical by us, were common at the Roman bar; such as introducing not only the accused person dressed in deep mourning, but presenting to the judges his family and young children, endeavouring to excite pity by their cries and tears.

The foundation of a lawyer's reputation and success must be laid in a profound knowledge of his profession.

If his abilities, as a ſpeaker, be ever ſo eminent; yet, if his knowledge of the law be ſuperficial, few will chooſe to engage him in their defence. Beſide previous ſtudy and an ample ſtock of acquired knowledge, another thing inſeparable from the ſucceſs of every pleader, is a diligent and painful attention to every cauſe with which he is entruſted; to all the facts and circumſtances with which it is connected. Thus he will in a great meaſure be prepared for the arguments of his opponent; and, being previouſly acquainted with the weak parts of his own cauſe, he will be able to fortify them in the beſt manner againſt the attack of his adverſary.

Though the ancient popular and vehement manner of pleading is now in a great meaſure ſuperſeded, we muſt not infer that there is no room for eloquence at the bar, and that the ſtudy of it is ſuperfluous. There is perhaps no ſcene of public ſpeaking, where eloquence is more requiſite. The dryneſs and ſubtilty of ſubjects uſually agitated at the bar, require, more than any other, a certain kind of eloquence, in order to command attention; to give weight to the arguments employed, and to prevent what the pleader advances from paſſing unregarded. The effect of good ſpeaking is always great. There is as much difference in the impreſſion made by a cold, dry and confuſed ſpeaker, and that made by one who pleads the ſame cauſe with elegance, order and ſtrength, as there is between our conception of an object, when preſented in twilight, and when viewed in the effulgence of noon.

Purity and neatneſs of expreſſion is in this ſpecies of eloquence chiefly to be ſtudied; a ſtyle perſpicuous

and proper, not needleſsly overcharged with the pedantry of law terms, nor affectedly avoiding theſe, when ſuitable and requiſite. Verboſity is a fault of which men of this profeſſion are frequently accuſed; into which the habit of ſpeaking and writing haſtily, and with little preparation, almoſt unavoidably betrays them. It cannot therefore be too earneſtly recommended to thoſe, who are beginning to practiſe at the bar, that they early guard againſt this, while they have leiſure for preparation. Let them form themſelves to the habit of a ſtrong and correct ſtyle; which will become natural to them afterward, when compelled by multiplicity of buſineſs to compoſe with precipitation. Whereas, if a looſe and negligent ſtyle have been ſuffered to become familiar, they will not be able, even upon occaſions when they wiſh to make an unuſual effort, to expreſs themſelves with force and elegance.

Diſtinctneſs in ſpeaking at the bar is a capital property. It ſhould be ſhown firſt in ſtating the queſtion; in exhibiting clearly the point in debate; what we admit; what we deny; and where the line of diviſion begins between us and the adverſe party. Next, it ſhould appear in the order and arrangement of all the parts of the pleading. A clear method is of the higheſt conſequence in every ſpecies of oration; but in thoſe intricate caſes, which belong to the bar, it is infinitely eſſential.

Narration of facts ſhould always be as conciſe as the nature of them will admit. They are always very neceſſary to be remembered; conſequently unneceſſary minuteneſs in relating them overloads the memory. Whereas, if a pleader omit all ſuperfluous circum-

ſtances in his recital, he adds ſtrength to the material facts; gives a clearer view of what he relates, and makes the impreſſion of it more laſting. In argumentation, however, a more diffuſe manner ſeems requiſite at the bar than on ſome other occaſions. For in popular aſſemblies, where the ſubject of debate is often a plain queſtion, arguments gain ſtrength by conciſeneſs. But the intricacy of law points frequently requires the arguments to be expanded and placed in different lights, in order to be fully apprehended.

Candour in ſtating the arguments of his adverſary cannot be too much recommended to every pleader. If he diſguiſe them, or place them in a falſe light, the artifice will ſoon be diſcovered; and the judge and the hearers will conclude, that he either wants diſcernment to perceive, or fairneſs to admit the ſtrength of his opponent's reaſoning. But, if he ſtate with accuracy and candour the arguments uſed againſt him, before he endeavour to combat them, a ſtrong prejudice is created in his favour. He will appear to have entire confidence in his cauſe, ſince he does not attempt to ſupport it by artifice or concealment. The judge will therefore be inclined to receive more readily the impreſſions made upon him by a ſpeaker who appears both fair and penetrating.

Wit may ſometimes be ſerviceable at the bar, particularly in a lively reply, by which ridicule is thrown on what an adverſary has advanced. But a young pleader ſhould never reſt his ſtrength on this dazzling talent. His office is not to excite laughter, but to produce conviction; nor perhaps did any one ever riſe to an eminence in his profeſſion by being a witty lawyer.

Since an advocate personates his client, he must plead his cause with a proper degree of warmth. He must be cautious however of prostituting his earnestness and sensibility by an equal degree of ardour on every subject. There is a dignity of character, which it is highly important for every one of this profession to support. An opinion of probity and honour in a pleader is his most powerful instrument of persuasion. He should always, therefore, decline embarking in causes which are odious and manifestly unjust; and, when he supports a doubtful cause, he should lay the chief stress upon those arguments which appear to him to be most forcible; reserving his zeal and indignation for cases where injustice and iniquity are flagrant.

ELOQUENCE OF THE PULPIT.

HAVING treated of the eloquence of popular assemblies, and of that of the bar, we shall now consider the strain and spirit of that eloquence which is suited to the pulpit. This field of public speaking has several advantages peculiar to itself. The dignity and importance of its subjects must be allowed to be superior to any other. They admit the highest embellishment in description, and the greatest warmth and vehemence of expression. In treating his subject the preacher has also peculiar advantages. He speaks not to one or a few judges, but to a large assembly. He is not afraid of interruption. He chooses his subject at leisure; and has all the assistance of the most

accurate premeditation. The disadvantages, however, which attend the eloquence of the pulpit, are not inconsiderable. The preacher, it is true, has no contention with an adversary; but debate awakens genius, and excites attention. His subjects, though noble, are trite and common. They are become so familiar to the public ear, that it requires no ordinary genius in the preacher to fix attention. Nothing is more difficult than to bestow on what is common the grace of novelty. Besides, the subject of the preacher usually confines him to abstract qualities, to virtues and vices; whereas, that of other popular speakers leads them to treat of persons; which is generally more interesting to the hearers, and occupies more powerfully the imagination. We are taught by the preacher to detest only the crime; by the pleader to detest the criminal. Hence it happens that, though the number of moderately good preachers is great, so few have arrived at eminence. Perfection is very distant from modern preaching. The object, however, is truly noble, and worthy of being pursued with zeal.

To excel in preaching, it is necessary to have a fixed and habitual view of its object. This is to persuade men to become good. Every sermon ought therefore to be a persuasive oration. It is not to discuss some abstruse point, that the preacher ascends the pulpit. It is not to teach his hearers something new, but to make them better; to give them at once clear views and persuasive impressions of religious truths.

The principal characteristics of public eloquence, as distinguished from the other kinds of public speaking, appear to be these two, gravity and warmth. It

is neither eaſy nor common to unite theſe characters of eloquence. The grave, when it is predominant, becomes a dull, uniform ſolemnity. The warm, when it wants gravity, borders on the light and theatrical. A proper union of the two, forms that character of preaching, which the French call *Onction*; that affecting, penetrating, and intereſting manner, which flows from a ſtrong ſenſe in the preacher of the importance of the truths he delivers, and an earneſt deſire that they may make full impreſſion on the hearts of his hearers.

A ſermon, as a particular ſpecies of compoſition, requires the ſtricteſt attention to unity. By this we mean that there ſhould be ſome main point to which the whole tenor of the ſermon ſhall refer. It muſt not be a pile of different ſubjects heaped upon each other; but one object muſt predominate through the whole. Hence, however, it muſt not be underſtood, that there ſhould be no diviſions or ſeparate heads in a diſcourſe; nor that one ſingle thought only ſhould be exhibited in different points of view. Unity is not to be underſtood in ſo limited a ſenſe; it admits ſome variety; it requires only that union and connexion be ſo far preſerved, as to make the whole concur in ſome one impreſſion on the mind. Thus, for inſtance, a preacher may employ ſeveral different arguments to enforce the love of God; he may alſo inquire into the cauſes of the decay of this virtue; ſtill one great object is preſented to the mind. But if, becauſe his text ſays, "He that loveth God, muſt "love his brother alſo," he ſhould therefore mix in the ſame diſcourſe arguments for the love of God and for the love of our neighbour, he would groſsly

offend againſt unity, and leave a very confuſed impreſſion on the minds of his hearers.

Sermons are always more ſtriking, and generally more uſeful, the more preciſe and particular the ſubject of them is. Unity can never be ſo perfect in a general, as in a particular ſubject. General ſubjects, indeed, ſuch as the excellency or the pleaſures of religion, are often choſen by young preachers, as the moſt ſhowy, and the eaſieſt to be handled; but theſe ſubjects produce not the high effects of preaching. Attention is much more commanded by taking ſome particular view of a great ſubject, and employing on that the whole force of argument and eloquence. To recommend ſome one virtue, or inveigh againſt a particular vice, affords a ſubject not deficient in unity or preciſion. But, if that virtue or vice be conſidered as aſſuming a particular aſpect in certain characters or certain ſituations in life, the ſubject becomes ſtill more intereſting. The execution is more difficult, but the merit and the effect are higher.

A preacher ſhould be cautious not to exhauſt his ſubject; ſince nothing is more oppoſite to perſuaſion, than unneceſſary and tedious fulneſs. There are always ſome things which he may ſuppoſe to be known, and ſome which require only brief attention. If he endeavour to omit nothing which his ſubject ſuggeſts, he muſt unavoidably encumber it, and diminiſh its force.

To render his inſtructions intereſting to his hearers ſhould be the grand object of every preacher. He ſhould bring home to their hearts the truths which he inculcates, and make each ſuppoſe himſelf particularly addreſſed. He ſhould avoid all intricate reaſonings;

avoid expreſſing himſelf in general, ſpeculative propoſitions; or laying down practical truths in an abſtract, metaphyſical manner. A diſcourſe ought to be carried on in the ſtrain of direct addreſs to the audience; not in the ſtrain of one writing an eſſay, but one ſpeaking to a multitude, and ſtudying to connect what is called application, or what immediately refers to practice, with the doctrinal parts of the ſermon.

It is always highly advantageous to keep in view the different ages, characters, and conditions of men, and to accommodate directions and exhortations to each of theſe different claſſes. Whenever you advance what touches a man's character, or is applicable to his circumſtances, you are ſure of his attention. No ſtudy is more neceſſary for a preacher, than the ſtudy of human life, and of the human heart. To diſcover a man to himſelf in a light, in which he never ſaw his character before, produces a wonderful effect. Thoſe ſermons, though the moſt difficult in compoſition, are not only the moſt beautiful, but alſo the moſt uſeful which are founded on the illuſtration of ſome peculiar character, or remarkable piece of hiſtory in the ſacred writings; by purſuing which we may trace, and lay open, ſome of the moſt ſecret windings of the human heart. Other topics of preaching are become trite; but this is an extenſive field which hitherto has been little explored, and poſſeſſes all the advantages of being curious, new, and highly uſeful. Biſhop Butler's ſermons on the *character of Balaam* is an example of this kind of preaching.

Faſhion, which operates ſo extenſively on human manners, has given to preaching at different times a change of character. This however is a torrent which

swells to-day and subsides to-morrow. Sometimes poetical preaching is fashionable; sometimes philosophical. At one time it must be all pathetic; at another all argumentative; as some celebrated preacher has set the example. Each of these modes is very defective; and he who conforms himself to it, will both confine and corrupt his genius. Truth and good sense are the sole basis, on which he can build with safety. Mode and humour are feeble and unsteady. No example should be servilely imitated. From various examples the preacher may collect materials for improvement; but servility of imitation extinguishes all genius, or rather proves entire want of it.

Exc:

CONDUCT OF A DISCOURSE IN ALL ITS PARTS. INTRODUCTION, DIVISION, NARRATION, AND EXPLICATION.

HAVING already considered what is peculiar to each of the three great fields of public speaking, popular assemblies, the bar, and the pulpit, we shall now treat of what is common to them all, and explain the conduct of a discourse or oration in general.

The parts which compose a regular oration are these six; the exordium or introduction; the state or the division of the subject; narration or explication; the reasoning or arguments; the pathetic part; and the conclusion. It is not necessary that each of these enter into every public discourse, nor that they al-

ways enter in this order. There are many excellent discourses in which some of these parts are omitted. But, as they are the constituent parts of a regular oration, and as in every discourse some of them must occur, it is agreeable to our present purpose, to examine each of them distinctly.

The design of the introduction is to conciliate the good will of the hearers; to excite their attention; and to render them open to persuasion. When a speaker is previously secure of the good will, attention, and docility of his audience; a formal introduction may be omitted. Respect for his hearers will in that case require only a short exordium, to prepare them for the other parts of his discourse.

The introduction is a part of a discourse, which requires no small care. It is always important to begin well; to make a favourable impression at first setting out, when the minds of the hearers, as yet vacant and free, are more easily prejudiced in favour of the speaker. We must add, also, that a good introduction is frequently found to be extremely difficult. Few parts of a discourse give more trouble to the composer, or require more delicacy in the execution.

An introduction should be easy and natural. It should always be suggested by the subject. The writer should not plan it before he has meditated in his own mind the substance of his discourse. By taking the opposite course, and composing in the first place an introduction, the writer will often find that he is either led to lay hold of some common-place topic, or that instead of the introduction being accommodated to the discourse, he is under the necessity of accommodating the discourse to the introduction.

In this part of a discourse correctness of expression should be carefully studied. This is peculiarly requisite on account of the situation of the hearers. At the beginning they are more disposed to criticise, than at any other period; they are then occupied by the subject and the arguments; their attention is entirely directed to the speaker's style and manner. Care therefore is requisite to prepossess them in his favour; though too much art must be cautiously avoided, since it will then be more easily detected, and will derogate from that persuasion, which the other parts of the discourse are intended to produce.

Modesty is also an indispensable characteristic of a good introduction. If the speaker begin with an air of arrogance and ostentation, the self-love and pride of his hearers will be presently awakened, and follow him with a very suspicious eye through the rest of his discourse. His modesty should appear not only in his expression, but in his whole manner; in his looks, in his gestures, and in the tone of his voice. Every audience is pleased with those marks of respect and awe which are paid by the speaker. The modesty however of an introduction should betray nothing mean or abject. Together with modesty and deference to his hearers, the orator should show a certain sense of dignity, arising from persuasion of the justice or importance of his subject.

Particular cases excepted, the orator should not put forth all his strength at the beginning; but it should rise and grow upon his hearers, as his discourse advances. The introduction is seldom the place for vehemence and passion. The audience must be gradually prepared, before the speaker venture on strong and

paſſionate ſentiments. Yet, when the ſubject is ſuch that the very mention of it naturally awakens ſome paſſionate emotion; or when the unexpected preſence of ſome perſon or object in a popular aſſembly inflames the ſpeaker; either of theſe will juſtify an abrupt and vehement exordium. Thus the appearance of Catiline in the ſenate renders the violent opening of Cicero's firſt oration againſt him very natural and proper. "Quouſque tandem, Catalina, abutere patientiâ noſ-"trâ?" Biſhop Atterbury, preaching from this text, "Bleſſed is he, whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me," ventures on this bold exordium: "And can any man "then be offended in thee, bleſſed Jeſus?" Which addreſs to our Saviour he continues, till he enters on the diviſion of his ſubject. But ſuch introductions ſhould be attempted by very few, ſince they promiſe ſo much vehemence and ardour through the reſt of the diſcourſe, that it is extremely difficult to ſatisfy the expectation of the hearers.

An introduction ſhould not anticipate any material part of the ſubject. When topics or arguments, which are afterward to be enlarged upon, are hinted at, and in part exhibited in the introduction; they loſe upon their ſecond appearance the grace of novelty. The impreſſion, intended to be made by any capital thought, is always made with greateſt advantage, when it is made entire, and in its proper place.

An introduction ſhould be proportioned in length and kind to the diſcourſe which follows it. In length, as nothing can be more abſurd than to erect a large portico before a ſmall building; and in kind, as it is no leſs abſurd to load with ſuperb ornaments the portico of a plain dwelling-houſe; or to make the approach to a monument as gay as that to an arbour.

After the introduction, the propoſition or enunciation of the ſubject, commonly ſucceeds; concerning which we ſhall only obſerve, that it ſhould be clear and diſtinct, and expreſſed without affectation in the moſt conciſe and ſimple manner. To this generally ſucceeds the diviſion, or laying down the method of the diſcourſe; in the management of which the following rules ſhould be carefully obſerved.

Firſt, The parts, into which the ſubject is divided, muſt be really diſtinct from each other. It were an abſurd diviſion, for example, if a ſpeaker ſhould propoſe to explain firſt the advantages of virtue, and next thoſe of juſtice or temperance; becauſe the firſt head plainly comprehends the ſecond, as a genus does the ſpecies. Such a method of proceeding involves the ſubject in confuſion.

Secondly, We muſt be careful always to follow the order of nature; beginning with the moſt ſimple points; with ſuch as are moſt eaſily underſtood, and neceſſary to be firſt diſcuſſed; and proceeding to thoſe which are built upon the former, and ſuppoſe them to be known. The ſubject muſt be divided into thoſe parts into which it is moſt eaſily and naturally reſolved.

Thirdly, The members of a diviſion ought to exhauſt the ſubject; otherwiſe the diviſion is incomplete; the ſubject is exhibited by pieces only, without diſplaying the whole.

Fourthly, Let conciſeneſs and preciſion be peculiarly ſtudied. A diviſion always appears to moſt advantage, when the ſeveral heads are expreſſed in the cleareſt, moſt forcible, and feweſt words poſſible. This never fails to ſtrike the hearers agreeably; and

contributes alſo to make the diviſions more eaſily remembered.

Fifthly, Unneceſſary multiplication of heads ſhould be cautiouſly avoided. To divide a ſubject into many minute parts, by endleſs diviſions and ſubdiviſions, produces a bad effect in ſpeaking. In a logical treatiſe this may be proper; but it renders an oration hard and dry, and unneceſſarily fatigues the memory. A ſermon may admit from three to five or ſix heads, including ſubdiviſions; ſeldom are more allowable.

The next conſtituent part of a diſcourſe is narration or explication. Theſe two are joined together, becauſe they fall nearly under the ſame rules, and becauſe they generally anſwer the ſame purpoſe; ſerving to illuſtrate the cauſe, or the ſubject, of which one treats, before proceeding to argue on one ſide or the other; or attempting to intereſt the paſſions of the hearers.

To be clear and diſtinct, to be probable, and to be conciſe, are the qualities which critics chiefly require in narration. Diſtinctneſs is requiſite to the whole of the diſcourſe, but belongs eſpecially to narration, which ought to throw light on all that follows. At the bar, a fact, or a ſingle circumſtance, left in obſcurity, or miſunderſtood by the judge, may deſtroy the effect of all the argument and reaſoning which the pleader employs. If his narration be improbable, it will be diſregarded; if it be tedious and diffuſe, it will fatigue and be forgotten. To render narration diſtinct, particular attention is requiſite in aſcertaining clearly the names, dates, places, and every other important circumſtance of the facts recounted. In order to be probable in narration, it is neceſſary to exhibit the

characters of the persons of whom we speak, and to shew that their actions proceeded from such motives as are natural, and likely to gain belief. To be as concise as the subject will admit, all superfluous circumstances must be rejected; by which the narration will be rendered more forcible and more clear.

In sermons, explication of the subject to be discoursed on occupies the place of narration at the bar, and is to be conducted in a similar manner. It must be concise, clear, and distinct; in a style correct and elegant, rather than highly adorned. To explain the doctrine of the text with propriety; to give a full and clear account of the nature of that virtue or duty which forms the subject of discourse, is properly the didactic part of preaching; on the right execution of which much depends. In order to succeed, the preacher must meditate profoundly on the subject; so as to place it in a clear and striking point of view. He must consider what light it may derive from other passages of scripture; whether it be a subject nearly allied to some other, from which it ought to be distinguished; whether it can be advantageously illustrated by comparing or opposing it to some other thing; by searching into causes, or tracing effects; by pointing out examples, or appealing to the hearts of the hearers; that thus a precise and circumstantial view may be afforded of the doctrine inculcated. By distinct and apt illustrations of the known truths of religion, a preacher may both display great merit, as a composer, and, what is infinitely more valuable, render his discourses weighty, instructive, and useful.

24a.

THE ARGUMENTATIVE PART OF A DISCOURSE, THE PATHETIC PART, AND THE PERORATION.

As the great end for which men ſpeak on any ſerious occaſion, is to convince their hearers that ſomething is true, or right, or good, and thus to influence their practice; reaſon and argument muſt conſtitute the foundation of all manly and perſuaſive eloquence.

With regard to arguments, three things are requiſite. Firſt, invention of them; ſecondly, proper diſpoſition and arrangement of them; and thirdly, expreſſing them in the moſt forcible manner. Invention is undoubtedly the moſt material, and the baſis of the reſt. But in this, art can afford only ſmall aſſiſtance. It can aid a ſpeaker however in arranging and expreſſing thoſe arguments which his knowledge of the ſubject has diſcovered.

Suppoſing the arguments properly choſen, we muſt avoid blending thoſe together that are of a ſeparate nature. All arguments whatever are intended to prove one of theſe three things; that ſomething is true; that it is right or fit; or that it is profitable and good. Truth, duty, and intereſt are the three great ſubjects of diſcuſſion among men. But the arguments employed upon either of them are generally diſtinct; and he who blends them all under one topic which he calls his argument, as in ſermons is too frequently done, will render his reaſoning indiſtinct and inelegant.

With reſpect to the different degrees of ſtrength in arguments, the common rule is, to advance in the way of climax from the weakeſt to the moſt forcible. This method is recommended when the ſpeaker is convinced that his cauſe is clear, and eaſy to be proved. But this rule muſt not be univerſally obſerved. If he diſtruſt his cauſe, and have but one material argument, it is often proper to place this argument in the front; to prejudice his hearers early in his favour, and thus diſpoſe them to pay attention to the weaker reaſons which he may afterward introduce. When amid a variety of arguments there is one or two more feeble than the reſt, though proper to be uſed, Cicero adviſes to place them in the middle, as a ſituation leſs conſpicuous, than either the beginning or end of the train of reaſoning.

When arguments are ſtrong and ſatisfactory, the more they are ſeparated the better. Each can then bear to be introduced alone, placed in its full light, amplified and contemplated. But, when they are of a doubtful or preſumptive nature, it is ſafer to crowd them together, to form them into a phalanx, that, though individually weak, they may mutually ſupport each other.

Arguments ſhould never be extended too far, nor multiplied too much. This ſerves rather to render a cauſe ſuſpicious, than to increaſe its ſtrength. A needleſs multiplicity of arguments burdens the memory, and diminiſhes the weight of that conviction which a few well choſen arguments produce. To expand them alſo beyond the bounds of reaſonable illuſtration, is always enfeebling. When a ſpeaker endeavours to expoſe a favourable argument in every light poſſible, fa-

tigued by the effort, he loſes the ſpirit, with which he ſet out; and ends with feebleneſs, what he began with force.

Having attended thus far to the proper arrangement of arguments, we proceed to another eſſential part of a diſcourſe, the pathetic; in which, if any where, eloquence reigns and exerts its power. On this head the following directions appear uſeful.

Conſider carefully whether the ſubject admit the pathetic, and render it proper; and, if it do, what part of the diſcourſe is moſt fit for it. To determine theſe points belongs to good ſenſe. Many ſubjects admit not the pathetic; and even in thoſe that are ſuſceptible of it, an attempt to excite the paſſions in a wrong place may expoſe an orator to ridicule. It may in general be obſerved, that, if we expect any emotion which we raiſe, to have a laſting effect, we muſt ſecure in our favour the underſtanding and judgment. The hearers muſt be ſatisfied that there are ſufficient grounds for their engaging in the cauſe with zeal and ardour. When argument and reaſoning have produced their full effect, the pathetic is admitted with the greateſt force and propriety.

A ſpeaker ſhould cautiouſly avoid giving his hearers warning that he intends to excite their paſſions. Every thing of this kind chills their ſenſibility. There is alſo a great difference between telling the hearers that they ought to be moved, and actually moving them. To every emotion or paſſion nature has adapted certain correſponding objects; and without ſetting theſe before the mind, it is impoſſible for an orator to

excite that emotion. We are warmed with gratitude, we are touched with compaſſion, not when a ſpeaker ſhows us that theſe are noble diſpoſitions, and that it is our duty to feel them; nor when he exclaims againſt us for our indifference and coldneſs. Hitherto he has addreſſed only our reaſon or conſcience. He muſt deſcribe the kindneſs and tenderneſs of our friend; he muſt exhibit the diſtreſs ſuffered by the perſon for whom he would intereſt us. Then, and not before, our hearts begin to be touched, our gratitude or compaſſion begins to flow. The baſis, therefore, of all ſucceſsful execution in pathetic oratory, is to paint the object of that paſſion which we deſire to raiſe, in the moſt natural and ſtriking manner; to deſcribe it with ſuch circumſtances as are likely to awaken it in the minds of others.

To ſucceed in the pathetic, it is neceſſary to attend to the proper language of the paſſions. This, if we conſult nature, we ſhall ever find is unaffected and ſimple. It may be animated by bold and ſtrong figures, but it will have no ornament, nor finery. There is a great difference between painting to the imagination and to the heart. The one may be done with deliberation and coolneſs; the other muſt always be rapid and ardent. In the former, art and labour may be ſuffered to appear; in the latter no proper effect can be produced, unleſs it be the work of nature only. Hence all digreſſions ſhould be avoided which may interrupt or turn aſide the ſwell of paſſion. Hence compariſons are always dangerous, and commonly quite improper in the midſt of the pathetic. It is alſo to be obſerved, that violent emotions cannot be laſting. The pathetic

therefore ſhould not be prolonged too much. Due regard ſhould always be preſerved to what the hearers will bear; for he who attempts to carry them farther in paſſion than they will follow him, fruſtrates his purpoſe. By endeavouring to warm them too much, he takes the ſureſt method of freezing them completely.

Concerning the peroration or concluſion of a diſcourſe, a few words will be ſufficient. Sometimes the whole pathetic part comes in moſt properly at the concluſion. Sometimes, when the diſcourſe has been altogether argumentative, it is proper to conclude with ſumming up the arguments, placing them in one view, and leaving the impreſſion of them full and ſtrong on the minds of the hearers. For the great rule of a concluſion, and what nature obviouſly ſuggeſts, is, place that laſt on which you chooſe to reſt the ſtrength of your cauſe.

In every kind of public ſpeaking it is important to hit the preciſe time of concluding; to bring the diſcourſe juſt to a point; neither ending abruptly and unexpectedly, nor diſappointing the expectation of the hearers, when they look for the end of the diſcourſe.

The ſpeaker ſhould always cloſe with dignity and ſpirit, that the minds of the hearers may be left warm, and that they may depart with a favourable impreſſion of the ſubject and of himſelf.

PRONUNCIATION OR DELIVERY.

THE great objects to which every public ſpeaker ſhould direct his attention in forming his delivery, are, firſt, to ſpeak ſo as to be fully and eaſily underſtood by his hearers; and next, to expreſs himſelf with ſuch grace and energy as to pleaſe and to move them.

To be fully and eaſily underſtood, the chief requiſites are, a due degree of loudneſs of voice, diſtinctneſs, ſlowneſs, and propriety of pronunciation.

To be heard is undoubtedly the firſt requiſite. The ſpeaker muſt endeavour to fill with his voice the ſpace occupied by the aſſembly. Though this power of voice is in a great meaſure a natural talent, it may receive conſiderable aſſiſtance from art. Much depends on the proper pitch and management of the voice. Every man has three pitches in his voice; the high, the middle, and the low. The high is uſed in calling aloud to ſome one at a diſtance; the low approaches to a whiſper; the middle is that which is employed in common converſation, and which ſhould generally be uſed in public ſpeaking. For it is a great error to ſuppoſe that the higheſt pitch of the voice is requiſite to be well heard by a great aſſembly. This is confounding two things materially different, loudneſs or ſtrength of ſound with the key or note on which we ſpeak. The voice may be rendered louder without altering the key; and the ſpeaker will always be able to give moſt body, moſt perſevering force of ſound, to that pitch of voice to which in converſation he is accuſtomed. Whereas, if

he begin on the higheſt key, he will fatigue himſelf, and ſpeak with pain; and, wherever a man ſpeaks with pain to himſelf, he is always heard with pain by his audience. Give the voice therefore full ſtrength and ſwell of ſound; but always pitch it on your ordinary ſpeaking key; a greater quantity of voice ſhould never be uttered than can be afforded without pain, and without any extraordinary effort. To be well heard, it is uſeful for a ſpeaker to fix his eye on ſome of the moſt diſtant perſons in the aſſembly, and to conſider himſelf as ſpeaking to them. We naturally and mechanically utter our words with ſuch ſtrength as to be heard by one to whom we addreſs ourſelves, provided he be within the reach of our voice. This is the caſe in public ſpeaking, as well as in common converſation. But it muſt be remembered, that ſpeaking too loudly is peculiarly offenſive. The ear is wounded when the voice comes upon it in rumbling, indiſtinct maſſes; beſide, it appears as if aſſent were demanded by mere vehemence and force of ſound.

To being well heard and clearly underſtood, diſtinctneſs of articulation is more conducive, perhaps, than mere loudneſs of ſound. The quantity of ſound requiſite to fill even a large ſpace, is leſs than is commonly ſuppoſed; with diſtinct articulation a man of a weak voice will make it extend farther than the ſtrongeſt voice can reach without it. This therefore demands peculiar attention. The ſpeaker muſt give every ſound its due proportion, and make every ſyllable, and even every letter, be heard diſtinctly. To ſucceed in this, rapidity of pronunciation muſt be avoided. A lifeleſs, drawling method however is not to be indulged. To

pronounce with a proper degree of flowneſs and with full and clear articulation cannot be too induſtriouſly ſtudied, nor too earneſtly recommended. Such pronunciation gives weight and dignity to a diſcourſe. It aſſiſts the voice by the pauſes and reſts which it allows it more eaſily to make; and it enables the ſpeaker to ſwell all his ſounds with more energy and more muſic. It aſſiſts him alſo in preſerving a due command of himſelf; whereas a rapid and hurried manner excites that flutter of ſpirits which is the greateſt enemy to all right execution in oratory.

To propriety of pronunciation nothing is more conducive than giving to every word which we utter, that ſound which the moſt polite uſage appropriates to it, in oppoſition to broad, vulgar, or provincial pronunciation. On this ſubject, however, written inſtructions avail nothing. But there is one obſervation which it may be uſeful to make. In our language every word of more ſyllables than one, has one accented ſyllable. The genius of the language requires the voice to mark that ſyllable by a ſtronger percuſſion, and to paſs more ſlightly over the reſt. The ſame accent ſhould be given to every word in public ſpeaking and in common diſcourſe. Many perſons err in this reſpect. When they ſpeak in public and with ſolemnity, they pronounce differently from what they do at other times. They dwell upon ſyllables, and protract them; they multiply accents on the ſame word from a falſe idea that it gives gravity and force to their diſcourſe, and increaſes the pomp of public declamation. But this is one of the greateſt faults which can be committed in pronunciation; it conſtitutes what is termed a theatrical or mouthing manner, and gives an artificial, affected air

to ſpeech, which detracts greatly from its agreeableneſs and its impreſſion.

We ſhall now treat of thoſe higher parts of delivery, by ſtudying which a ſpeaker endeavours not merely to render himſelf intelligible, but to give grace and force to what he utters. Theſe may be comprehended under four heads, emphaſis, pauſes, tones, and geſtures.

By emphaſis is meant a fuller and ſtronger ſound of voice, by which we diſtinguiſh the accented ſyllable of ſome word, on which we intend to lay particular ſtreſs, and to ſhow how it affects the reſt of the ſentence. To acquire the proper management of emphaſis, the only rule is, ſtudy to acquire a juſt conception of the force and ſpirit of thoſe ſentiments which you are to deliver. In all prepared diſcourſes it would be extremely uſeful if they were read over or rehearſed in private, with a view of aſcertaining the proper emphaſis, before they were pronounced in public; marking at the ſame time the emphatical words in every ſentence, or at leaſt in the moſt important parts of the diſcourſe, and fixing them well in memory. A caution, however, muſt be given againſt multiplying emphatical words too much. They become ſtriking, only when uſed with prudent reſerve. If they recur too frequently; if a ſpeaker attempt to render every thing which he ſays of high importance, by a multitude of ſtrong emphaſes, they will ſoon fail to excite the attention of his hearers.

Next to emphaſis, pauſes demand attention. They are of two kinds; firſt, emphatical pauſes; and ſecondly, ſuch as mark the diſtinctions of ſenſe. An emphatical pauſe is made after ſomething has been ſaid of peculiar moment, on which we wiſh to fix

the hearer's attention. Sometimes a matter of importance is preceded by a pauſe of this nature. Such pauſes have the ſame effect with ſtrong emphaſes, and are ſubject to the ſame rules; eſpecially to the caution juſt now given, of not repeating them too frequently. For, as they excite uncommon attention, and conſequently raiſe expectation, if this be not fully anſwered, they occaſion diſappointment and diſguſt.

But the moſt frequent and the principal uſe of pauſes is, to mark the diviſions of the ſenſe, and at the ſame time to permit the ſpeaker to draw his breath; and the proper management of ſuch pauſes is one of the moſt nice and difficult articles in delivery. A proper command of the breath is peculiarly requiſite. To obtain this, every ſpeaker ſhould be very careful to provide a full ſupply of breath for what he is to utter. It is a great miſtake to ſuppoſe that the breath muſt be drawn only at the end of a period, when the voice is allowed to fall. It may eaſily be gathered at the intervals of a period, when the voice ſuffers only a momentary ſuſpenſion. By this management a ſufficient ſupply may be obtained for carrying on the longeſt period without improper interruptions.

Pauſes in public diſcourſe muſt be formed upon the manner in which we expreſs ourſelves in ſenſible converſation, and not upon the ſtiff, artificial manner, which we acquire from peruſing books according to common punctuation. Punctuation in general is very arbitrary; often capricious and falſe; dictating a uniformity of tone in the pauſes, which is extremely unpleaſing. For it muſt be obſerved, that, to render pauſes graceful and expreſſive, they muſt not only be made in the right places, but alſo be accompanied by

proper tones of voice; by which the nature of these pauses is intimated much more than by their length, which can never be exactly measured. Sometimes only a slight and simple suspension of the voice is proper; sometimes a degree of cadence is requisite; and sometimes that peculiar tone and cadence which mark the conclusion of a period. In all these cases, a speaker is to regulate himself by the manner in which he speaks, when engaged in earnest discourse with others.

In reading or reciting verse, there is a peculiar difficulty in making the pauses with propriety. There are two kinds of pauses, which belong to the music of verse; one at the end of a line, and the other in the middle of it. Rhyme always renders the former sensible, and compels observance of it in pronunciation. In blank verse it is less perceivable; and when there is no suspension of the sense, it has been doubted, whether in reading such verse any regard should be paid to the close of a line. On the stage, indeed, where the appearance of speaking in verse should be avoided, the close of such lines as make no pause in the sense should not be rendered perceptible to the ear. On other occasions we ought, for the sake of melody, to read blank verse in such manner as to make each line sensible to the ear. In attempting this, however, every appearance of sing-song and tone must be cautiously avoided. The close of a line, where there is no pause in the meaning, should be marked only by so slight a suspension of sound, as may distinguish the passage from one line to another, without injuring the sense.

The pause in the middle of the line falls after the 4th, 5th, 6th, or 7th syllable, and no other. When

this pauſe coincides with the ſlighteſt diviſion in the ſenſe, the line may be read with eaſe; as in the two firſt verſes of Pope's Meſſiah:

> Ye nymphs of Solyma, begin the ſong,
> To heavenly themes ſublimer ſtrains belong.

But if words, that have ſo intimate a connexion, as not to admit even a momentary ſeparation, be divided from each other by this cæſural pauſe; we then perceive a conflict between the ſenſe and ſound, which renders it difficult to read ſuch lines gracefully. In ſuch caſes it is beſt to ſacrifice ſound to ſenſe. For inſtance, in the following lines of Milton:

> ——————What in me is dark,
> Illumine; what is low, raiſe and ſupport.

The ſenſe clearly dictates the pauſe after "illumine," which ought to be obſerved; though, if melody only were to be regarded, "illumine" ſhould be connected with what follows, and no pauſe made before the 4th or 6th ſyllable. So alſo in the following line of Pope's Epiſtle to Arbuthnot:

> I ſit; with ſad civility I read.

The ear points out the pauſe as falling after "ſad," the fourth ſyllable. But to ſeparate "ſad" and "civility" would be very bad reading. The ſenſe allows no other pauſe than after the ſecond ſyllable, "ſit;" which therefore is the only one to be obſerved.

We proceed to treat of tones in pronunciation which are different both from emphaſes and pauſes; conſiſting in the modulation of the voice, the notes or variations of ſound which are employed in public

ſpeaking. The moſt material inſtruction which can be given on this ſubject, is to form the tones of public ſpeaking upon the tones of animated converſation. Every one who is engaged in ſpeaking on a ſubject which intereſts him nearly, has an eloquent or perſuaſive tone and manner. But, when a ſpeaker departs from his natural tone of expreſſion, he becomes frigid and unperſuaſive. Nothing is more abſurd than to ſuppoſe that as ſoon as a ſpeaker aſcends a pulpit, or riſes in a public aſſembly, he is inſtantly to lay aſide the voice with which he expreſſes himſelf in private, and to aſſume a new, ſtudied tone, and a cadence altogether different from his natural manner. This has vitiated all delivery, and has given riſe to cant and tedious monotony. Let every public ſpeaker guard againſt this error. Whether he ſpeak in private, or in a great aſſembly, let him remember that he ſtill ſpeaks. Let him take nature for his guide, and ſhe will teach him to expreſs his ſentiments and feelings in ſuch manner, as to make the moſt forcible and pleaſing impreſſion upon the minds of his hearers.

It now remains to treat of geſture, or what is called action in public diſcourſe. The beſt rule is, attend to the looks and geſture in which earneſtneſs, indignation, compaſſion, or any other emotion, diſcovers itſelf to moſt advantage in the common intercourſe of men; and let theſe be your model. A public ſpeaker muſt however adopt that manner which is moſt natural to himſelf. His motions and geſtures ought all to exhibit that kind of expreſſion which nature has dictated to him; and, unleſs this be the caſe, no ſtudy can prevent their appearing ſtiff and forced. But, though nature is the baſis on which

every grace of geſture muſt be founded, yet there is room for ſome improvements of art. The ſtudy of action conſiſts chiefly in guarding againſt awkward and diſagreeable motions, and in learning to perform ſuch as are natural to the ſpeaker, in the moſt graceful manner. Numerous are the rules which writers have laid down for the attainment of a proper geſticulation. But written inſtructions on this ſubject can be of little ſervice. To become uſeful, they muſt be exemplified. A few of the ſimpleſt precepts however may be obſerved with advantage. Every ſpeaker ſhould ſtudy to preſerve as much dignity as poſſible in the attitude of his body. He ſhould generally prefer an erect poſture; his poſition ſhould be firm, that he may have the fulleſt and freeſt command of all his motions. If any inclination be uſed, it ſhould be toward the hearers, which is a natural expreſſion of earneſtneſs. The countenance ſhould correſpond with the nature of the diſcourſe; and, when no particular emotion is expreſſed, a ſerious and manly look is always to be preferred. The eyes ſhould never be fixed entirely on any one object, but move eaſily round the audience. In motion, made with the hands, conſiſts the principal part of geſture in ſpeaking It is natural for the right hand to be employed more frequently than the left. Warm emotions require the exerciſe of them both together. But, whether a ſpeaker geſticulate with one, or with both his hands, it is important that all his motions be eaſy and unreſtrained. Narrow and confined movements are uſually ungraceful; and conſequently motions made with the hands, ſhould proceed from the ſhoulder, rather than from the elbow. Perpendicular movements are to be avoid-

ed. Oblique motions are moſt pleaſing and graceful. Sudden and rapid motions are ſeldom good. Earneſtneſs can be fully expreſſed without their aſſiſtance.

We cannot conclude this ſubject without earneſtly admoniſhing every ſpeaker to guard againſt affectation, which is the deſtruction of good delivery. Let his manner, whatever it be, be his own; neither imitated from another, nor taken from ſome imaginary model, which is unnatural to him. Whatever is native, though attended by ſeveral defects, is likely to pleaſe, becauſe it ſhows us the man; and becauſe it has the appearance of proceeding from the heart. To attain a delivery extremely correct and graceful, is what few can expect; ſince ſo many natural talents muſt concur in its formation. But to acquire a forcible and perſuaſive manner, is within the power of moſt perſons. They need only to diſmiſs bad habits, follow nature, and ſpeak in public as they do in private, when they ſpeak in earneſt and from the heart.

MEANS OF IMPROVING IN ELOQUENCE.

To thoſe who are anxious to excel in any of the higher kinds of oratory, nothing is more neceſſary than to cultivate habits of the ſeveral virtues, and to refine and improve their moral feelings. A true orator muſt poſſeſs generous ſentiments, warm feelings, and a mind turned toward admiration of

thoſe great and high objects which men are by nature formed to venerate. Connected with the manly virtues, he ſhould poſſeſs ſtrong and tender ſenſibility to all the injuries, diſtreſſes, and ſorrows of his fellow-creatures.

Next to moral qualifications, what is moſt requiſite for an orator, is a fund of knowledge. There is no art by which eloquence can be taught in any ſphere, without a ſufficient acquaintance with what belongs to that ſphere. Attention to the ornaments of ſtyle can only aſſiſt an orator in ſetting off to advantage the ſtock of materials which he poſſeſſes; but the materials themſelves muſt be derived from other ſources than from rhetoric. A pleader muſt make himſelf completely acquainted with the law; he muſt poſſeſs all that learning and experience which can be uſeful for ſupporting a cauſe, or convincing a judge. A preacher muſt apply himſelf cloſely to the ſtudy of divinity, of practical religion, of morals, and of human nature; that he may be rich in all topics of inſtruction and perſuaſion. He who wiſhes to excel in the ſupreme council of the nation, or in any public aſſembly, ſhould be thoroughly acquainted with the buſineſs that belongs to ſuch aſſembly; and ſhould attend with accuracy to all the facts which may be the ſubject of queſtion or deliberation.

Beſide the knowledge peculiar to his profeſſion, a public ſpeaker ſhould be acquainted with the general circle of polite literature. Poetry he will find uſeful for embelliſhing his ſtyle, for ſuggeſting lively images, or pleaſing illuſions. Hiſtory may be ſtill more advantageous; as the knowledge of facts, of eminent characters, and of the courſe of human affairs, finds

place on many occasions. Deficiency of knowledge even in subjects not immediately connected with his profession, will expose a public speaker to many disadvantages, and give his rivals, who are better qualified, a decided superiority.

To every one who wishes to excel in eloquence, application and industry cannot be too much recommended. Without this it is impossible to excel in any thing. No one ever became a distinguished pleader, or preacher, or speaker in any assembly, without previous labour and application. Industry indeed is not only necessary to every valuable acquisition, but it is designed by Providence as the seasoning of every pleasure, without which life is doomed to languish. No enemy is so destructive both to honourable attainments, and to the real and spirited enjoyment of life, as that relaxed state of mind, which proceeds from indolence and dissipation. He who is destined to excel in any art, will be distinguished by enthusiasm for that art; which, firing his mind with the object in view, will dispose him to relish every necessary labour. This was the characteristic of the great men of antiquity; and this must distinguish moderns who wish to imitate them. This honourable enthusiasm should be cultivated by students in oratory. If it be wanting to youth, manhood will flag exceedingly.

Attention to the best models contributes greatly to improvement in the arts of speaking and writing. Every one indeed should endeavour to have something that is his own, that is peculiar to himself, and will distinguish his style. Genius is certainly depressed, or want of it betrayed, by slavish imitation. Yet no genius is so original, as not to receive improvement

from proper examples in ſtyle, compoſition, and delivery. They always afford ſome new ideas, and ſerve to enlarge and correct our own. They quicken the current of thought, and excite emulation.

In imitating the ſtyle of a favourite author, a material diſtinction ſhould be obſerved between written and ſpoken language. Theſe are in reality two different modes of communicating ideas. In books we expect correctneſs, preciſion, all redundancies pruned, all repetitions avoided, language completely poliſhed. Speaking allows a more eaſy, copious ſtyle, and leſs confined by rule; repetitions may often be requiſite; parentheſes may ſometimes be ornamental; the ſame thought muſt often be placed in different points of view; ſince the hearers can catch it only from the mouth of the ſpeaker, and have not the opportunity, as in reading, of turning back again, and of contemplating what they do not entirely comprehend. Hence the ſtyle of many good authors would appear ſtiff, affected, and even obſcure, if transferred into a popular oration. How unnatural, for inſtance, would Lord Shafteſbury's ſentences ſound in the mouth of a public ſpeaker? Some kinds of public diſcourſe indeed, ſuch as that of the pulpit, where more accurate preparation and more ſtudied ſtyle are allowable, would admit ſuch a manner better than others, which are expected to approach nearer to extemporaneous ſpeaking. But ſtill there is generally ſuch a difference between a compoſition, intended only to be read, and one proper to be ſpoken, as ſhould caution us againſt a cloſe and improper imitation.

The compoſition of ſome authors approaches nearer to the ſtyle of ſpeaking than that of others, and

they may therefore be imitated with more safety. In our own language, Swift and Bolingbroke are of this description. The former, though correct, preserves the easy and natural manner of an unaffected speaker. The style of the latter is more splendid; but still it is the style of speaking, or rather of declamation.

Frequent exercise both in composing and speaking is a necessary mean of improvement. That kind of composition is most useful which is connected with the profession, or sort of public speaking, to which persons devote themselves. This they should ever keep in view, and gradually inure themselves to it. At the same time they should be cautious not to allow themselves to compose negligently on any occasion. He who wishes to write or speak correctly, should in the most trivial kind of composition, in writing a letter, or even in common conversation, study to express himself with propriety. By this we do not mean that he is never to write or speak, but in elaborate and artificial language. This would introduce stiffness and affectation, infinitely worse than the greatest negligence. But we must observe, that there is in every thing a proper and becoming manner; and on the contrary, there is also an awkward performance of the same thing. The becoming manner is often the most light, and seemingly most careless; but taste and attention are requisite to seize the just idea of it. That idea, when acquired, should be kept in view, and upon it should be formed, whatever we write or speak.

Exercises in speaking have always been recommended to students; and, when under proper regulation, must be of great use. Those public and promiscuous

ſocieties in which numbers are brought together who are frequently of low ſtations and occupations; who are connected by no common bond of union, except a ridiculous rage for public ſpeaking, and have no other object in view than to exhibit their ſuppoſed talents; are inſtitutions not only uſeleſs, but injurious. They are calculated to become ſeminaries of licentiouſneſs, petulance, and faction. Even the allowable meetings into which ſtudents of oratory may form themſelves, need direction in order to render them uſeful. If their ſubjects of diſcourſe be improperly choſen; if they ſupport extravagant or indecent topics; if they indulge themſelves in looſe and flimſy declamation; or accuſtom themſelves without preparation to ſpeak pertly on all ſubjects; they will unavoidably acquire a very faulty and vicious taſte in ſpeaking. It ſhould therefore be recommended to all thoſe who are members of ſuch ſocieties, to attend to the choice of their ſubjects; to take care that they be uſeful and manly, either connected with the courſe of their ſtudies, or related to morals and taſte, to action and life. They ſhould alſo be temperate in the practice of ſpeaking; not ſpeak too often, nor on ſubjects of which they are ignorant; but only when they have proper materials for a diſcourſe, and have previouſly conſidered and digeſted the ſubject. In ſpeaking, they ſhould be cautious always to keep good ſenſe and perſuaſion in view, rather than a ſhow of eloquence. By theſe means they will gradually form themſelves to a manly, correct, and perſuaſive manner of ſpeaking.

It may now be aſked, of what uſe will the ſtudy of critical and rhetorical writers be to thoſe who wiſh to

excel in eloquence? They certainly ought not to be neglected; and yet perhaps very much cannot be expected from them. It is however from the original ancient writers that the greateſt advantage may be derived; and it is a diſgrace to any one, whoſe profeſſion calls him to ſpeak in public, to be unacquainted with them. In all the ancient rhetorical writers there is indeed one defect; they are too ſyſtematical. They aim at doing too much; at reducing rhetoric to a perfect art, which may even ſupply invention with materials on every ſubject; ſo that one would ſuppoſe they expected to form an orator by rule, as they would form a carpenter. But in reality all that can be done, is to aſſiſt and enlighten taſte, and to point out to genius the courſe it ought to hold.

Ariſtotle was the firſt who took rhetoric out of the hands of the ſophiſts, and founded it on reaſon and ſolid ſenſe. Some of the profoundeſt obſervations, which have been made on the paſſions and manners of men, are to be found in his Treatiſe on Rhetoric; though in this, as in all his writings, his great conciſeneſs often renders him obſcure. The Greek rhetoricians who ſucceeded him, moſt of whom are now loſt, improved on his foundation. Two of them ſtill remain, Demetrius Phalereus, and Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus. Both wrote on the conſtruction of ſentences, and deſerve to be conſulted; particularly Dionyſius, who is a very accurate and judicious critic.

To recommend the rhetorical writings of Cicero is ſuperfluous. Whatever on the ſubject of eloquence is ſuggeſted by ſo great an orator, muſt be worthy of attention. His moſt extenſive work on this ſubject is

that *De Oratore.* None of his writings are more highly finiſhed than this treatiſe. The dialogue is polite; the characters are well ſupported, and the management of the whole is beautiful and pleaſing. The *Orator ad M. Brutum* is alſo a valuable treatiſe; and indeed through all Cicero's rhetorical works are diſplayed thoſe ſublime ideas of eloquence which are calculated to form a juſt taſte, and to inſpire that enthuſiaſm for the art which is highly conducive to excellence.

But of all ancient writers on the ſubject of oratory, the moſt inſtructive and moſt uſeful is Quintilian. His inſtitutions abound with good ſenſe, and diſcover a taſte in the higheſt degree juſt and accurate. Almoſt all the principles of good criticiſm are found in them. He has well digeſted the ancient ideas concerning rhetoric, and has delivered his inſtructions in elegant and poliſhed language.

COMPARATIVE MERIT OF THE ANCIENTS AND MODERNS.

A VERY curious queſtion has been agitated with regard to the comparative merit of the ancients and moderns. In France, this diſpute was carried on with great heat between Boileau and Madame Dacier for the ancients, and Perrault and La Motte for the moderns. Even at this day, men of letters are divided on the ſubject. A few reflections upon it may be uſeful.

To decry the ancient claſſics is a vain attempt. Their reputation is eſtabliſhed upon too ſolid a foundation to be ſhaken. Imperfections may be traced in their writings; but to diſcredit their works in general can belong only to peeviſhneſs or prejudice. The approbation of the public through ſo many centuries eſtabliſhes a verdict in their favour, from which there is no appeal.

In matters of mere reaſoning, the world may be long in error; and ſyſtems of philoſophy often have a currency for a time, and then die. But in objects of taſte there is no ſuch fallibility; as they depend not on knowledge and ſcience, but upon ſentiment and feeling. Now the univerſal feeling of mankind muſt be right; Homer and Virgil therefore muſt continue to ſtand upon the ſame ground which they have ſo long occupied.

Let us guard however againſt blind veneration for the ancients, and inſtitute a fair compariſon between them and the moderns. If the ancients had the pre-eminence in genius, yet the moderns muſt have ſome advantage in all arts which are improved by the natural progreſs of knowledge.

Hence in natural philoſophy, aſtronomy, chemiſtry, and other ſciences, which reſt upon obſervation of facts, the moderns have a decided ſuperiority over the ancients. Perhaps too in preciſe reaſoning, philoſophers of modern ages are ſuperior to thoſe of ancient times; as a more extenſive literary intercourſe has contributed to ſharpen the faculties of men. The moderns have alſo the ſuperiority in hiſtory and in political knowledge; owing to the extenſion of commerce, the diſcovery of different countries, the ſuperior facility of

intercourſe, and the multiplicity of events and revolutions which have taken place in the world. In poetry likewiſe ſome advantages have been gained in point of regularity and accuracy. In dramatic performances, improvements have certainly been made upon the ancient models. The variety of characters is greater; greater ſkill has been diſplayed in the conduct of the plot; and a happier attention to probability and decorum. Among the ancients we find higher conceptions, greater ſimplicity, and more original fancy. Among the moderns there is more of art and correctneſs, but leſs genius. But, though this remark may in general be juſt, there are ſome exceptions from it; Milton and Shakeſpeare are inferior to no poets in any age.

Among the ancients were many circumſtances favourable to the exertions of genius. They travelled much in ſearch of learning, and converſed with prieſts, poets, and philoſophers. They returned home full of diſcoveries, and fired by uncommon objects. Their enthuſiaſm was greater; and, few being ſtimulated to excel as authors, their fame was more intenſe and flattering. In modern times good writing is leſs prized. We write with leſs effort. Printing has ſo multiplied books, that aſſiſtance is eaſily procured. Hence mediocrity of genius prevails. To riſe beyond this, and to ſoar above the crowd, is given to few.

In epic poetry, Homer and Virgil are ſtill unrivalled; and orators, equal to Demoſthenes and Cicero, we have none. In hiſtory, we have no modern narration ſo elegant, ſo picturesque, ſo animated, and intereſting, as thoſe of Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Livy, Tacitus, and Salluſt. Our dramas, with all their im-

provements, are inferior in poetry and ſentiment to thoſe of Sophocles and Euripides. We have no comic dialogue that equals the correct, graceful, and elegant ſimplicity of Terence. The elegies of Tibullus, the paſtorals of Theocritus, and the lyric poetry of Horace, are ſtill unrivalled. By thoſe, therefore, who wiſh to form their taſte, and nouriſh their genius, the utmoſt attention muſt be paid to the ancient claſſics, both Greek and Roman.

After theſe reflections on the ancients and moderns, we proceed to a critical examination of the moſt diſtinguiſhed kinds of compoſition, and of the characters of thoſe writers, whether ancient or modern, who have excelled in them. Of orations and public diſcourſes much has already been ſaid. The remaining proſe compoſitions may be divided into hiſtorical writing, philoſophical writing, epiſtolary writing, and fictitious hiſtory.

HISTORICAL WRITING.

HISTORY is a record of truth for the inſtruction of mankind. Hence the great requiſites in a hiſtorian are impartiality, fidelity, and accuracy.

In the conduct of hiſtorical detail, the firſt object of a hiſtorian ſhould be, to give his work all poſſible unity. Hiſtory ſhould not conſiſt of unconnected parts. Its portions ſhould be united by ſome connecting principle, which will produce in the mind an impreſſion of ſomething that is one, whole, and entire.

Polybius, though not an elegant writer, is remarkable for this quality.

A hiſtorian ſhould trace actions and events to their ſources. He ſhould therefore be well acquainted with human nature and politics. His ſkill in the former will enable him to deſcribe the characters of individuals; and his knowledge of the latter to account for the revolutions of government, and the operation of political cauſes on public affairs. With regard to political knowledge, the ancients wanted ſome advantages which are enjoyed by the moderns. In ancient times there was leſs communication among neighbouring ſtates; no intercourſe by eſtabliſhed poſts, nor by ambaſſadors at diſtant courts. Larger experience too of the different modes of government has improved the modern hiſtorian beyond the hiſtorian of antiquity.

It is however in the form of narrative, and not by diſſertation, that the hiſtorian is to impart his political knowledge. Formal diſcuſſions expoſe him to ſuſpicion of being willing to accommodate his facts to his theory. They have alſo an air of pedantry, and evidently reſult from want of art. For reflections, whether moral, political, or philoſophical, may be inſinuated in the body of a narrative.

Clearneſs, order, and connexion are primary virtues in hiſtorical narration. Theſe are attained when the hiſtorian is complete maſter of his ſubject; can ſee the whole at one view; and comprehend the dependence of all its parts. Hiſtory being a dignified ſpecies of compoſition, it ſhould alſo be conſpicuous for gravity. There ſhould be nothing mean nor vulgar in the ſtyle; no quaintneſs, no ſmartneſs, no affectation, no wit. A hiſtory ſhould likewiſe be intereſting; and

this is the quality which chiefly diſtinguiſhes a writer of genius and eloquence.

To be intereſting, a hiſtorian muſt preſerve a medium between rapid recital and prolix detail. He ſhould know when to be conciſe, and when to enlarge. He ſhould make a proper ſelection of circumſtances. Theſe give life, body and colouring to his narration. They conſtitute what is termed hiſtorical painting.

In all theſe virtues of narration, particularly in pictureſque deſcription, the ancients eminently excel. Hence the pleaſure of reading Thucydides, Livy, Salluſt, and Tacitus. In hiſtorical painting there are great varieties. Livy and Tacitus paint in very different ways. The deſcriptions of Livy are full, plain, and natural; thoſe of Tacitus are ſhort and bold.

One embelliſhment, which the moderns have laid aſide, was employed by the ancients. They put orations into the mouths of celebrated perſonages. By theſe, they diverſified their hiſtory, and conveyed both moral and political inſtruction. Thucydides was the firſt who adopted this method; and the orations with which his hiſtory abounds, are valuable remains of antiquity. It is doubtful however whether this embelliſhment ſhould be allowed to the hiſtorian; for they form a mixture, unnatural to hiſtory, of truth and fiction. The moderns are more chaſte when on great occaſions the hiſtorian delivers in his own perſon the ſentiments and reaſonings of oppoſite parties.

Another ſplendid embelliſhment of hiſtory is the delineation of characters. Theſe are conſidered as exhibitions of fine writing; and hence the difficulty of excelling in this province. For characters may be too ſhining and laboured. The accompliſhed hiſtori-

an avoids here to dazzle too much. He is ſolicitous to give the reſemblance in a ſtyle equally removed from meanneſs and affectation. He ſtudies the grandeur of ſimplicity.

Sound morality ſhould always reign in hiſtory. A hiſtorian ſhould ever ſhow himſelf on the ſide of virtue. It is not, however, his province to deliver moral inſtructions in a formal manner. He ſhould excite indignation againſt the deſigning and the vicious; and by appeals to the paſſions, he will not only improve his reader, but take away from the natural coolneſs of hiſtorical narration.

In modern times hiſtorical genius has ſhone moſt in Italy. Acuteneſs, political ſagacity, and wiſdom are all conſpicuous in Machiavel, Guicciardin, Davila, Bentivoglio, and Father Paul. In Great Britain hiſtory has been faſhionable only a few years. For, though Clarendon and Burnet are conſiderable hiſtorians, they are inferior to Hume, Robertſon, and Gibbon.

The inferior kinds of hiſtorical compoſition are annals, memoirs, and lives. Annals are a collection of facts in chronological order; and the properties of an annaliſt are fidelity and diſtinctneſs. Memoirs are a ſpecies of compoſition, in which an author pretends not to give a complete detail of facts, but only to record what he himſelf knew, or was concerned in, or what illuſtrates the conduct of ſome perſon, or ſome tranſaction which he chooſes for his ſubject. It is not therefore expected of ſuch a writer, that he poſſeſs the ſame profound reſearch, and thoſe ſuperior talents which are requiſite in a hiſtorian. It is chiefly required of him, that he be ſprightly and intereſting. The French during two centuries have poured forth a

flood of memoirs; the moſt of which are little more than agreeable trifles. We muſt, however, except from this cenſure the memoirs of the Cardinal de Retz, and thoſe of the Duke of Sully. The former join to a lively narrative great knowledge of human nature. The latter deſerve very particular praiſe. They approach to the uſefulneſs and dignity of legitimate hiſtory. They are full of virtue and good ſenſe; and are well calculated to form both the heads and hearts of thoſe who are deſigned for public buſineſs and high ſtations in the world.

Biography is a very uſeful kind of compoſition; leſs ſtately than hiſtory; but perhaps not leſs inſtructive. It affords full opportunity of diſplaying the characters of eminent men, and of entering into a thorough acquaintance with them. In this kind of writing, Plutarch excels; but his matter is better than his manner; he has no peculiar beauty nor elegance. His judgment and accuracy alſo are ſometimes taxed. But he is a very humane writer, and fond of diſplaying great men in the gentle lights of retirement.

Before we conclude this ſubject, it is proper to obſerve, that of late years a great improvement has been introduced into hiſtorical compoſition. More particular attention than formerly, has been given to laws, cuſtoms, commerce, religion, literature, and to every thing that ſhows the ſpirit and genius of nations. It is now conceived that a hiſtorian ought to illuſtrate manners as well as facts and events. Whatever diſplays the ſtate of mankind in different periods; whatever illuſtrates the progreſs of the human mind, is more uſeful than details of ſieges and battles.

PHILOSOPHICAL WRITING AND DIALOGUE.

OF philoſophy, the profeſſed deſign is inſtruction. With the philoſopher therefore ſtyle, form and dreſs are inferior objects. But they muſt not be wholly neglected. The ſame truths and reaſonings, delivered with elegance, will ſtrike more, than in a dull and dry manner.

Beyond mere perſpicuity, the ſtricteſt preciſion and accuracy are required in a philoſophical writer; and theſe qualities may be poſſeſſed without dryneſs. Philoſophical writing admits a poliſhed, neat and elegant ſtyle. It admits the calm figures of ſpeech; but rejects whatever is florid and tumid. Plato and Cicero have left philoſophical treatiſes, compoſed with much elegance and beauty. Seneca is too fond of an affected, brilliant, ſparkling manner. Locke's Treatiſe on Human Underſtanding is a model of a clear and diſtinct philoſophical ſtyle. In the writings of Shafteſbury, on the other hand, philoſophy is dreſſed up with too much ornament and finery.

Among the ancients, philoſophical writing often aſſumed the form of dialogue. Plato is eminent for the beauty of his dialogues. In richneſs of imagination no philoſophic writer, ancient or modern, is equal to him. His only fault is the exceſſive fertility of his imagination, which ſometimes obſcures his judgment, and frequently carries him into allegory, fiction, enthuſiaſm, and the airy regions of myſtical theology.

Cicero's dialogues are not so spirited and characteristical as those of Plato. They are however agreeable, and well supported; and show us conversation, carried on among some principal persons of ancient Rome with freedom, good breeding, and dignity. Of the light and humorous dialogue, Lucian is a model; and he has been imitated by several modern writers. Fontenelle has written dialogues, which are sprightly and agreeable; but his characters, whoever his personages be, all became Frenchmen. The divine dialogues of Dr. Henry More amid the academic stiffness of the age are often remarkable for character and vivacity. Bishop Berkley's dialogues are abstract, yet perspicuous.

EPISTOLARY WRITING.

In epistolary writing we expect ease and familiarity; and much of its charm depends on its introducing us into some acquaintance with the writer. Its fundamental requisites are nature and simplicity, sprightliness and wit. The style of letters, like that of conversation, should flow easily. It ought to be neat and correct, but no more. Cicero's epistles are the most valuable collection of letters, extant in any language. They are composed with purity and elegance, but without the least affectation. Several letters of Lord Bolingbroke and of Bishop Atterbury are masterly. In those of Pope there is generally too much study; and his letters to ladies in particular are full of affectation. Those of Swift and Arbuthnot are

written with eaſe and ſimplicity. Of a familiar correſpondence, the moſt accompliſhed model are the letters of Madame de Sevignè. They are eaſy, varied, lively and beautiful. The letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montague, are perhaps more agreeable to the epiſtolary ſtyle, than any in the Engliſh language.

FICTITIOUS HISTORY.

THIS ſpecies of compoſition includes a very numerous, and in general a very inſignificant claſs of writings, called romances and novels. Of theſe however the influence is known to be great both on the morals and taſte of a nation. Notwithſtanding the bad ends to which this mode of writing is applied, it might be employed for very uſeful purpoſes. Romances and novels deſcribe human life and manners, and diſcover the errors into which we are betrayed by the paſſions. Wiſe men in all ages have uſed fables and fictions as vehicles of knowledge; and it is an obſervation of Lord Bacon, that the common affairs of the world are inſufficient to fill the mind of man. He muſt create worlds of his own, and wander in the regions of imagination.

All nations whatſoever have diſcovered a love of fiction, and talents for invention. The Indians, Perſians, and Arabians, abounded in fables and parables. Among the Greeks, we hear of the Ionian and Mileſian tales. During the dark ages, fiction aſſumed an unuſual form from the prevalence of chivalry. Romances aroſe, and carried the marvellous to its ſummit.

Their knights were patterns not only of the moſt heroic courage, but of religion, generoſity, courteſy, and fidelity; and the heroines were no leſs diſtinguiſhed for modeſty, delicacy, and dignity of manners. Of theſe romances, the moſt perfect model is the Orlando Furioſo. But, as magic and enchantment came to be diſbelieved and ridiculed, the chivalerian romances were diſcontinued, and were ſucceeded by a new ſpecies of fictitious writing.

Of the ſecond ſtage of romance writing, the Cleopatra of Madame Scuderi and the Arcadia of Sir Philip Sydney are good examples. In theſe, however, there was ſtill too large a proportion of the marvellous; and the books were too voluminous and tedious. Romance writing appeared therefore in a new form; and dwindled down to the familiar novel. Intereſting ſituations in real life are the ground-work of novel writing. Upon this plan, the French have produced ſome works of conſiderable merit. Such are the Gil Blas of Le Sage and the Marianne of Marivaux.

In this mode of writing, the Engliſh are inferior to the French; yet in this kind there are ſome performances which diſcover the ſtrength of the Britiſh genius. No fiction was ever better ſupported than the Adventures of Robinſon Cruſoe. Fielding's novels are highly diſtinguiſhed for humour and boldneſs of character. Richardſon, the author of Clariſſa, is the moſt moral of all our novel writers; but he poſſeſſes the unfortunate talent of ſpinning out pieces of amuſement into an immeaſurable length. The trivial performances which daily appear under the title of lives, adventures, and hiſtories, by anonymous authors, are moſt inſipid, and, it muſt be confeſſed, often tend to deprave the morals, and to encourage diſſipation and idleneſs.

NATURE OF POETRY. ITS ORIGIN AND PROGRESS. VERSIFICATION.

WHAT, it may be aſked, is poetry? and how does it differ from proſe? Many diſputes have been maintained among critics upon theſe queſtions. The eſſence of poetry is ſuppoſed by Ariſtotle, Plato, and others, to conſiſt in fiction. But this is too limited a deſcription. Many think the characteriſtic of poetry lies in imitation. But imitation of manners and characters may be carried on in proſe as well as in poetry.

Perhaps the beſt definition is this, "poetry is the "language of paſſion, or of enlivened imagination, "formed moſt commonly into regular numbers." As the primary object of a poet is to pleaſe and to move, it is to the imagination and the paſſions that he addreſſes himſelf. It is by pleaſing and moving, that he aims to inſtruct and reform.

Poetry is older than proſe. In the beginning of ſociety there were occaſions upon which men met together for feaſts and ſacrifices, when muſic, dancing, and ſongs were the chief entertainment. The meetings of American tribes are diſtinguiſhed by muſic and ſongs. In ſongs they celebrate their religious rites and martial achievements; and in ſuch ſongs we trace the beginning of poetic compoſition.

Man is by nature both a poet and muſician. The ſame impulſe which produced a poetic ſtyle, prompted a certain melody or modulation of ſound, ſuited to the emotions of joy or grief, love or anger. Muſic and

poetry are united in ſong, and mutually aſſiſt and exalt each other. The firſt poets ſung their own verſes. Hence the origin of verſification, or the arrangement of words to tune or melody.

Poets and ſongs are the firſt objects that make their appearance in all nations. Apollo, Orpheus and Amphion were the firſt tamers of mankind among the Greeks. The Gothic nations had their ſcalders, or poets. The Celtic tribes had their bards. Poems and ſongs are among the antiquities of all countries; and, as the occaſions of their being compoſed are nearly the ſame, ſo they remarkably reſemble each other in ſtyle. They compriſe the celebration of gods, and heroes, and victories. They abound in fire and enthuſiaſm; they are wild, irregular, and glowing.

During the infancy of poetry, all its different kinds were mingled in the ſame compoſition; but in the progreſs of ſociety, poems aſſumed their different regular forms. Time ſeparated into claſſes the ſeveral kinds of poetic compoſition. The ode and the elegy, the epic poem and the drama, are all reduced to rule, and exerciſe the acuteneſs of criticiſm.

ENGLISH VERSIFICATION.

NATIONS, whoſe language and pronunciation were muſical, reſted their verſification chiefly on the quantities of their ſyllables; but mere quantity has very little effect in Engliſh verſe. For the difference, made between long and ſhort ſyllables in our manner of pronouncing them, is very inconſiderable.

The only perceptible difference among our syllables arises from that strong percussion of voice which is termed accent. This accent however does not always make the syllable longer, but only gives it more force of sound; and it is rather upon a certain order and succession of accented and unaccented syllables, than upon their quantity, that the melody of our verse depends.

In the constitution of our verse there is another essential circumstance. This is the cæsural pause, which falls near the middle of each line. This pause may fall after the fourth, fifth, sixth, or seventh syllable; and by this mean uncommon variety and richness are added to English versification.

Our English verse is of Iambic structure, composed of a nearly alternate succession of unaccented and accented syllables. When the pause falls earliest, that is, after the fourth syllable, the briskest melody is thereby formed. Of this, the following lines from Pope, are a happy illustration:

On her white breast | a sparkling cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss | and Infidels adore;
Her lively looks | a sprightly mind discloses,
Quick, as her eyes, | and as unfix'd as those.
Favours to none, | to all she smiles extends;
Oft she rejects, | but never once offends.

When the pause falls after the fifth syllable, dividing the line into two equal portions, the melody is sensibly altered. The verse, losing the brisk air of the former pause, becomes more smooth and flowing.

Eternal sunshine | of the spotless mind,
Each prayer accepted, | and each wish resign'd.

When the pauſe follows the ſixth ſyllable, the melody becomes grave. The movement of the verſe is more ſolemn and meaſured.

The wrath of Peleus' ſon, | the direful ſpring
Of all the Grecian woes, | O goddeſs, ſing !

The grave cadence becomes ſtill more ſenſible when the pauſe follows the ſeventh ſyllable. This kind of verſe however ſeldom occurs ; and its effect is to diverſify the melody.

And in the ſmooth, deſcriptive | murmur ſtill,
Long lov'd, ador'd ideas, | all adieu.

Our blank verſe is a noble, bold and diſencumbered mode of verſification. It is free from the full cloſe, which rhyme forces upon the ear at the end of every couplet. Hence it is peculiarly ſuited to ſubjects of dignity and force. It is more favourable than rhyme to the ſublime and highly pathetic. It is the moſt proper for an epic poem and for tragedy. Rhyme finds its proper place in the middle regions of poetry ; and blank verſe in the higheſt.

The preſent form of our Engliſh heroic rhyme in couplets is modern. The meaſure uſed in the days of Elizabeth, James, and Charles I. was the ſtanza of eight lines. Waller was the firſt who introduced couplets ; and Dryden eſtabliſhed the uſage. Waller ſmoothed our verſe, and Dryden perfected it. The verſification of Pope is peculiar. It is flowing, ſmooth, and correct in the higheſt degree. He has totally thrown aſide the triplets ſo common in Dryden. In eaſe and variety, Dryden excels Pope. He frequently makes his couplets run into one another with ſomewhat of the freedom of blank verſe.

PASTORAL POETRY.

IT was not before men had begun to assemble in great cities, and the bustle of courts and large societies was known, that pastoral poetry assumed its present form. From the tumult of a city life, men looked back with complacency to the innocence of rural retirement. In the court of Ptolemy, Theocritus wrote the first pastorals with which we are acquainted; and in the court of Augustus, Virgil imitated him.

The pastoral is a very agreeable species of poetry. It lays before us the gay and pleasing scenes of nature. It recals objects which are commonly the delight of our childhood and youth. It exhibits a life with which we associate ideas of innocence, peace and leisure. It transports us into Elysian regions. It presents many objects favourable to poetry; rivers and mountains, meadows and hills, rocks and trees, flocks and shepherds void of care.

A pastoral poet is careful to exhibit whatever is most pleasing in the pastoral state. He paints its simplicity, tranquillity, innocence, and happiness; but conceals its rudeness and misery. If his pictures be not those of real life, they must resemble it. This is a general idea of pastoral poetry. But, to understand it more perfectly, let us consider, 1. The scenery: 2. The characters; and lastly, the subjects it should exhibit.

The scene must always be in the country; and the poet must have a talent for description. In this respect,

Virgil is excelled by Theocritus, whose descriptions are richer and more picturesque. In every pastoral, a rural prospect should be drawn with distinctness. It is not enough to have unmeaning groups of roses and violets, of birds, breezes, and brooks thrown together. A good poet gives such a landscape as a painter might copy. His objects are particularized. The stream, the rock, or the tree, so stands forth as to make a figure in the imagination, and give a pleasing conception, of the place where we are.

In his allusions to natural objects as well as in professed descriptions of the scenery, the poet must study variety. He must diversify his face of nature by presenting us new images. He must also suit the scenery to the subject of his pastoral; and exhibit nature under such forms as may correspond with the emotions and sentiments he describes. Thus Virgil, when he gives the lamentation of a despairing lover, communicates a gloom to the scene.

> Tantum inter densas, umbrosa cacumina, fagos,
> Assiduè veniebat; ibi hæc incondita solus
> Montibus et sylvis studio jactabat inani.

With regard to the characters in pastorals, it is not sufficient that they be persons residing in the country. Courtiers and citizens who resort thither occasionally, are not the characters expected in pastorals. We expect to be entertained by shepherds, or persons wholly engaged in rural occupations. The shepherd must be plain and unaffected in his manner of thinking. An amiable simplicity must be the ground-work of his character; though there is no necessity for his being

dull and insipid. He may have good sense, and even vivacity; tender and delicate feelings. But he must never deal in general reflections, or abstract reasonings; nor in conceits of gallantry; for these are consequences of refinement. When Aminta in Tasso is disentangling his mistress's hair from the tree, to which a savage had bound it, he is made to say, "Cruel tree, "how couldst thou injure that lovely hair, which did "thee so much honour? Thy rugged trunk was not "worthy of so lovely knots. What advantage have "the servants of love, if those precious chains are "common to them and to trees?" Strained sentiments, like these, suit not the woods. The language of rural personages is that of plain sense and natural feeling; as in the following beautiful lines of Virgil:

Sepibus in nostris parvam te roscida mala
(Dux ego vester eram) vidi cum matre legentem;
Alter ab undecimo tum me jam ceperat annus,
Jam fragiles poteram a terra contengere ramos.
Ut vidi, ut perii, ut me malus abstulit error!

The next inquiry is, what are the proper subjects of pastorals? For it is not enough that the poet give us shepherds discoursing together. Every good poem has a subject that in some way interests us. In this lies the difficulty of pastoral writing. The active scenes of country life are too barren of incidents. The condition of a shepherd has few things in it that excite curiosity or surprise. Hence of all poems the pastoral is most meagre in subject, and least diversified in strain. Yet this defect is not to be ascribed solely to barrenness of subjects. It is in a great measure the fault of the poet. For human nature and human passions are

much the ſame in every ſituation and rank of life. What a variety of objects within the rural ſphere do the paſſions preſent! The ſtruggles and ambition of ſhepherds; their adventures; their diſquiet and felicity; the rivalſhip of lovers; unexpected ſucceſſes and diſaſters; are all proper ſubjects for the paſtoral muſe.

Theocritus and Virgil are the two great fathers of paſtoral writing. For ſimplicity of ſentiment, harmony of numbers, and richneſs of ſcenery, the former is highly diſtinguiſhed. But he ſometimes deſcends to ideas that are groſs and mean, and makes his ſhepherds abuſive and immodeſt. Virgil on the contrary preſerves the paſtoral ſimplicity without any offenſive ruſticity.

Modern writers of paſtorals have in general imitated the ancient poets. Sannazarius, however, a Latin poet, in the age of Leo X. attempted a bold innovation by compoſing piſcatory eclogues, and changing the ſcene from the woods to the ſea, and the character from ſhepherds to fiſhermen. But the attempt was ſo unhappy that he has no followers. The toilſome life of fiſhermen has nothing agreeable to preſent to the imagination. Fiſhes and marine productions have nothing poetical in them. Of all the moderns, Geſner, a poet of Switzerland, has been the moſt happy in paſtoral compoſition. Many new ideas are introduced in his Idyls. His ſcenery is ſtriking, and his deſcriptions lively. He is pathetic, and writes to the heart. Neither the paſtorals of Pope, nor of Philips, do much honour to Engliſh poetry. The paſtorals of Pope are barren; their chief merit is the ſmoothneſs of the numbers. Philips attempted to be more ſim-

ple and natural than Pope; but wanted genius to support the attempt. His topics, like thoſe of Pope, are beaten; and, inſtead of being natural or ſimple, he is flat and inſipid. Shenſtone's paſtoral ballad is one of the moſt elegant poems of the kind in the Engliſh language.

In latter times paſtoral writing has been extended into regular drama; and this is the chief improvement the moderns have made in it. Two pieces of this kind are highly celebrated, Guarini's Paſtor Fido, and Taſſo's Aminta. Both poſſeſs great beauties; but the latter is the preferable poem, becauſe leſs intricate, and leſs affected; though not wholly free from Italian refinement. As a poem, however, it has great merit. The poetry is pleaſing and gentle, and the Italian language confers on it much of that ſoftneſs which is ſuited to the paſtoral.

The Gentle Shepherd of Allan Ramſay is a paſtoral drama which will bear compariſon with any compoſition of the kind in any language. To this admirable poem it is a diſadvantage, that it is written in the old ruſtic dialect of Scotland, which muſt ſoon be obſolete; and it is a farther diſadvantage, that it is formed ſo entirely on the rural manners of Scotland, that none, but a native of that country, can thoroughly underſtand and reliſh it. It is full of natural deſcription, and excels in tenderneſs of ſentiment. The characters are well drawn, the incidents affecting, the ſcenery and manners lively and juſt.

LYRIC POETRY.

THE ode is a ſpecies of poetry, which has much dignity, and in which many writers in every age have diſtinguiſhed themſelves. Ode in Greek is the ſame with ſong or hymn; and lyric poetry implies that the verſes are accompanied with a lyre, or muſical inſtrument. In the ode, poetry retains its firſt form, and its original union with muſic. Sentiments commonly conſtitute its ſubject. It recites not actions. Its ſpirit and the manner of its execution mark its character. It admits a bolder and more paſſionate ſtrain than is allowed in ſimple recital. Hence the enthuſiaſm that belongs to it. Hence that neglect of regularity, thoſe digreſſions, and that diſorder, it is ſuppoſed to admit.

All odes may be claſſed under four denominations. 1. Hymns addreſſed to God, or compoſed on religious ſubjects. 2. Heroic odes, which concern the celebration of heroes and great actions. 3. Moral and philoſophical odes, which refer chiefly to virtue, friendſhip, and humanity. 4. Feſtive and amorous odes, which are calculated merely for amuſement and pleaſure.

Enthuſiaſm being conſidered as the characteriſtic of the ode, it has often degenerated into licentiouſneſs. This ſpecies of writing has above all others been infected by want of order, method, and connexion. The poet is out of ſight in a moment. He is ſo ab-

rupt and eccentric, so irregular and obscure, that we cannot follow him. It is not indeed necessary that the structure of the ode be so perfectly regular as an epic poem. But in every composition there ought to be a whole; and this whole should consist of connected parts. The transition from thought to thought may be light and delicate, but the connexion of ideas should be preserved; the author should think, and not rave.

Pindar, the father of lyric poetry, has led his imitators into enthusiastic wildness. They imitate his disorder without catching his spirit. In Horace's odes every thing is correct, harmonious, and happy. His elevation is moderate, not rapturous. Grace and elegance are his characteristics. He supports a moral sentiment with dignity, touches a gay one with felicity, and has the art of trifling most agreeably. His language too is most fortunate.

Many Latin poets of later ages have imitated him. Casimir, a Polish poet of the last century, is of this number; and discovers a considerable degree of original genius and poetic fire. He is, however, far inferior to the Roman in graceful expression. Buchanan in some of his lyric compositions is very elegant and classical.

In our own language, Dryden's ode on St. Cecilia is well known. Mr. Gray in some of his odes is celebrated for tenderness and sublimity; and in Dodsley's Miscellanies are several very beautiful lyric poems. Professedly Pindaric odes are seldom intelligible. Cowley is doubly harsh in his Pindaric compositions. His Anacreontic odes are happier, and perhaps the most agreeable and perfect in their kind of all his poems.

DIDACTIC POETRY.

OF didactic poetry, it is the expreſs intention to convey inſtruction and knowledge. It may be executed in different ways. The poet may treat ſome inſtructive ſubject in a regular form; or without intending a great or regular work he may inveigh againſt particular vices, or make ſome moral obſervations on human life and characters.

The higheſt ſpecies of didactic poetry is a regular treatiſe on ſome philoſophical, grave, or uſeful ſubject. Such are the books of Lucretius de Rerum Natura, the Georgics of Virgil, Pope's Eſſay on Criticiſm, Akenſide's Pleaſures of the Imagination, Armſtrong on Health, and the Art of Poetry by Horace, Vida, and Boileau.

In all ſuch works, as inſtruction is the profeſſed object, the chief merit conſiſts in ſound thought, juſt principles, and apt illuſtrations. It is neceſſary however that the poet enliven his leſſons by figures, incidents, and poetical painting. Virgil in his Georgics embelliſhes the moſt trivial circumſtances in rural life. When he teaches that the labour of the farmer muſt begin in ſpring, he expreſſes himſelf thus:

> Vere novo gelidus canis cum montibus humor
> Liquitur, et Zephyro putris ſe gleba reſolvit;
> Depreſſo incipiat jam tum mihi Taurus aratro
> Ingemere, et ſulco attritus ſplendeſcere vomer.

In all didactic works such method is requisite as will clearly exhibit a connected train of instruction. With regard to episodes and embellishments, writers of didactic poetry are indulged great liberties. For in a poetical performance a continued series of instruction without embellishment soon fatigues. The digressions in the Georgics of Virgil are his principal beauties. The happiness of a country life, the fable of Aristeus, and the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice, cannot be praised too much.

A didactic poet ought also to connect his episodes with his subject. In this, Virgil is eminent. Among modern didactic poets, Akenside and Armstrong are distinguished. The former is rich and poetical; but the latter maintains greater equality, and more chaste and correct elegance.

Of didactic poetry, satires and epistles run into the most familiar style. Satire seems to have been at first a relic of ancient comedy, the grossness of which was corrected by Ennius and Lucilius. At length, Horace brought it into its present form. Reformation of manners is its professed end; and vice and vicious characters are the objects of its censure. There are three different modes in which it has been conducted by the three great ancient satirists, Horace, Juvenal, and Persius.

The satires of Horace have not much elevation. They exhibit a measured prose. Ease and grace characterize his manner; and he glances rather at the follies and weaknesses of mankind, than at their vices. He smiles while he reproves. He moralizes like a sound philosopher, but with the politeness of a cour-

tier. Juvenal is more declamatory and ſerious; and has greater ſtrength and fire. Perſius has diſtinguiſhed himſelf by a noble and ſublime morality.

Poetical epiſtles, when employed on moral or critical ſubjects, ſeldom riſe into a higher ſtrain of poetry, than ſatires. But in the epiſtolary form, many other ſubjects may be treated; as love, poetry, or elegiac. The ethical epiſtles of Pope are a model; and in them he ſhows the ſtrength of his genius. Here he had a full opportunity for diſplaying his judgment and wit, his conciſe and happy expreſſion, together with the harmony of his numbers. His imitations of Horace are ſo happy, that it is difficult to ſay, whether the original or the copy ought to be moſt admired.

Among moral and didactic writers, Dr. Young ought not to be paſſed over in ſilence. Genius appears in all his works; but his Univerſal Paſſion may be conſidered as poſſeſſing the full merit of that animated conciſeneſs, particularly requiſite in ſatirical and didactic compoſitions. At the ſame time it is to be obſerved, that his wit is often too ſparkling, and his ſentences too pointed. In his Night Thoughts there is great energy of expreſſion, ſeveral pathetic paſſages, many happy images, and many pious reflections. But the ſentiments are frequently overſtrained and turgid, and the ſtyle harſh and obſcure.

DESCRIPTIVE POETRY.

In deſcriptive poetry the higheſt exertions of genius may be diſplayed. In general, indeed, deſcription is introduced as an embelliſhment, not as the ſubject of a regular work. It is the teſt of a poet's imagination, and always diſtinguiſhes an original from a ſecond rate genius. A writer of an inferior claſs ſees nothing new or peculiar in the object he would paint; his conceptions are looſe and vague; and his expreſſions feeble and general. A true poet places an object before our eyes. He gives it the colouring of life; a painter might copy from him.

The great art of pictureſque deſcription lies in the ſelection of circumſtances. Theſe ought never to be vulgar or common. They ſhould mark ſtrongly the object. No general deſcription is good; all diſtinct ideas are formed upon particulars. There ſhould alſo be uniformity in the circumſtances ſelected. In deſcribing a great object, every circumſtance brought forward ſhould tend to aggrandize; and in deſcribing a gay object, all the circumſtances ſhould tend to beautify it. Laſtly, the circumſtances in deſcription ſhould be expreſſed with conciſeneſs and ſimplicity.

The largeſt and fulleſt deſcriptive performance in perhaps any language, is Thomſon's Seaſons; a work which poſſeſſes very uncommon merit. The ſtyle is ſplendid and ſtrong, but ſometimes harſh and indiſtinct. He is an animated and beautiful deſcriber; for he

had a feeling heart and a warm imagination. He ſtudied nature with care; was enamoured of her beauties; and had the happy talent of painting them like a maſter. To ſhow the power of a ſingle well-choſen circumſtance in heightening a deſcription, the following paſſage may be produced from his Summer, where, relating the effects of heat in the torrid zone, he is led to take notice of the peſtilence that deſtroyed the Engliſh fleet at Carthagena, under Admiral Vernon.

——You, gallant Vernon, ſaw
The miſerable ſcene: you, pitying, ſaw
To infant weakneſs ſunk the warrior's arm;
Saw the deep racking pang; the ghaſtly form;
The lip pale quivering, and the beamleſs eye
No more with ardour bright; you heard the groans
Of agonizing ſhips from ſhore to ſhore;
Heard nightly plung'd amid the ſullen waves
The frequent corſe.——

All the circumſtances here ſelected tend to heighten the diſmal ſcene; but the laſt image is the moſt ſtriking in the picture.

Of deſcriptive narration there are beautiful examples in Parnell's Tale of the Hermit. The ſetting forth of the hermit to viſit the world, his meeting a companion, and the houſes in which they are entertained, of the vain man, the covetous man, and the good man, are pieces of highly finiſhed painting. But the richeſt and the moſt remarkable of all the deſcriptive poems in the Engliſh language, are the Allegro and the Penſeroſo of Milton. They are the ſtore-houſe whence many ſucceeding poets have enriched their deſcriptions,

and are inimitably fine poems. Take, for inſtance, the following lines from the Penſeroſo :

——————I walk unſeen
On the dry, ſmooth-ſhaven green,
To behold the wandering moon
Riding near her higheſt noon ;
And oft, as if her head ſhe bow'd,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft on a plat of riſing ground
I hear the far-off curfew ſound,
Over ſome wide watered ſhore
Swinging ſlow with ſolemn roar ;
Or, if the air will not permit,
Some ſtill removed place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom ;
Far from all reſort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's drowſy charm,
To bleſs the doors from nightly harm ;
Or let my lamp at midnight hour
Be ſeen in ſome high lonely tower,
Exploring Plato, to unfold
What worlds, or what vaſt regions hold
Th' immortal mind, that hath forſook
Her manſion in this fleſhy nook ;
And of theſe demons, that are found
In fire, air, flood, or under ground.

Here are no general expreſſions ; all is pictureſque, expreſſive, and conciſe. One ſtrong point of view is exhibited to the reader ; and the impreſſion made, is lively and intereſting.

Both Homer and Virgil excel in poetical deſcription. In the ſecond Æneid, the ſacking of Troy is ſo particularly deſcribed, that the reader finds himſelf in

the midſt of the ſcene. The death of Priam is a maſter-piece of deſcription. Homer's battles are all wonderful. Oſſian too paints in ſtrong colours, and is remarkable for touching the heart. He thus pourtrays the ruins of Balclutha: "I have ſeen the walls "of Balclutha; but they were deſolate. The fire "had reſounded within the halls; and the voice of "the people is now heard no more. The ſtream of "Clutha was removed from its place by the fall of "the walls; the thiſtle ſhook there its lonely head; "the moſs whiſtled to the wind. The fox looked "out of the window; the rank graſs waved round his "head. Deſolate is the dwelling of Moina; ſilence "is in the houſe of her fathers."

Much of the beauty of deſcriptive poetry depends upon a proper choice of epithets. Many poets are often careleſs in this particular; hence the multitude of unmeaning and redundant epithets. Hence the "Liquidi Fontes" of Virgil, and the "Prata Canis "Albicant Pruinis" of Horace. To obſerve that water is liquid, and that ſnow is white, is little better than mere tautology. Every epithet ſhould add a new idea to the word which it qualifies. So in Milton:

> Who ſhall tempt with wandering feet
> The dark, unbottomed, infinite abyſs;
> And through the palpable obſcure find out
> His uncouth way? Or ſpread his airy flight,
> Upborne with indefatigable wings,
> Over the vaſt abrupt?

The deſcription here is ſtrengthened by the epithets. The wandering feet, the unbottomed abyſs, the palpable obſcure, the uncouth way, the indefatigable wing, are all happy expreſſions.

THE POETRY OF THE HEBREWS.

IN treating of the various kinds of poetry, that of the ſcriptures juſtly deſerves a place. The ſacred books preſent us the moſt ancient monuments of poetry now extant, and furniſh a curious ſubject of criticiſm. They diſplay the taſte of a remote age and country. They exhibit a ſingular, but beautiful ſpecies of compoſition; and it muſt give great pleaſure, if we find the beauty and dignity of the ſtyle adequate to the weight and importance of the matter. Dr. Lowth's learned treatiſe on the poetry of the Hebrews ought to be peruſed by all. It is an exceedingly valuable work both for elegance of ſtyle and juſtneſs of criticiſm. We cannot do better than to follow the track of this ingenious author.

Among the Hebrews, poetry was cultivated from the earlieſt times. Its general conſtruction is ſingular and peculiar. It conſiſts in dividing every period into correſpondent, for the moſt part into equal members, which anſwer to each other both in ſenſe and ſound. In the firſt member of a period a ſentiment is expreſſed; and in the ſecond the ſame ſentiment is amplified, or repeated in different terms, or ſometimes contraſted with its oppoſite. Thus, "Sing unto the Lord a new ſong; ſing unto the Lord all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, and bleſs his name; ſhew forth his ſalvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen; his wonders among all people."

This form of poetical compoſition is deduced from the manner in which the Hebrews ſung their ſacred hymns. Theſe were accompanied with muſic, and performed by bands of ſingers and muſicians, who alternately anſwered each other. One band began the hymn thus: "The Lord reigneth, let the earth re-"joice;" and the chorus, or ſemi-chorus, took up the correſponding verſicle; "Let the multitudes of the "iſles be glad thereof."

But, independent of its peculiar mode of conſtruction, the ſacred poetry is diſtinguiſhed by the higheſt beauties of ſtrong, conciſe, bold, and figurative expreſſion. Conciſeneſs and ſtrength are two of its moſt remarkable characters. The ſentences are always ſhort. The ſame thought is never dwelt upon long. Hence the ſublimity of the Hebrew poetry; and all writers, who attempt the ſublime, might profit much by imitating in this reſpect the ſtyle of the old teſtament. No writings abound ſo much in bold and animated figures, as the ſacred books. Metaphors, compariſons, allegories, and perſonifications, are particularly frequent. But, to reliſh theſe figures juſtly, we muſt tranſport ourſelves into Judea, and attend to particular circumſtances in it. Through all that region little or no rain falls in the ſummer months. Hence, to repreſent diſtreſs, frequent alluſions are made to a dry and thirſty land, where no water is; and hence, to deſcribe a change from diſtreſs to proſperity, their metaphors are founded on the falling of ſhowers, and the burſting out of ſprings in a deſert. Thus in Iſaiah, "The wilderneſs and the ſoli-"tary place ſhall be glad, and the deſert ſhall rejoice "and bloſſom as the roſe. For in the wilderneſs

" ſhall waters break out, and ſtreams in the de-
" ſert ; and the parched ground ſhall become a pool ;
" and the thirſty land ſprings of water ; in the habi-
" tation of dragons there ſhall be graſs with ruſhes
" and reeds."

Compariſons, employed by the ſacred poets, are generally ſhort, touching only one point of reſemblance. Such is the following: " He that ruleth over men,
" muſt be juſt, ruling in the fear of God ; and he
" ſhall be as the light of the morning, when the ſun
" riſeth ; even a morning without clouds ; as the
" tender graſs ſpringing out of the earth by clear
" ſhining after rain."

Allegory is likewiſe frequently employed in the ſacred books ; and a fine inſtance of this occurs in the lxxxth Pſalm, wherein the people of Iſrael are compared to a vine. Of parables, the prophetical writings are full ; and, if to us they ſometimes appear obſcure, we ſhould remember that in early times it was univerſally the cuſtom among all eaſtern nations, to convey ſacred truths under myſterious figures.

The figure, however, which elevates beyond all others the poetical ſtyle of the ſcriptures, is perſonification. The perſonifications of the inſpired writers exceed in force and magnificence thoſe of all other poets. This is more particularly true when any appearance or operation of the Almighty is concerned. " Before him went the peſtilence. The waters ſaw
" thee, O God, and were afraid. The mountains ſaw
" thee, and they trembled. The overflowings of the
" waters paſſed by ; the deep uttered his voice,
" and liſted up his hands on high." The poetry of the ſcriptures is very different from modern poetry.

It is the burſt of inſpiration. Bold ſublimity, not correct elegance, is its character.

The ſeveral kinds of poetry, found in ſcripture, are chiefly the didactic, elegiac, paſtoral, and lyric. The book of Proverbs is the principal inſtance of the didactic ſpecies of poetry. Of elegiac poetry, the lamentation of David over Jonathan is a very beautiful inſtance. Of paſtoral poetry, the Song of Solomon is a high exemplification; and of lyric poetry, the Old Teſtament is full. The whole book of Pſalms is a collection of ſacred odes.

Among the compoſers of the ſacred books there is an evident diverſity of ſtyle. Of the ſacred poets, the moſt eminent are the author of the book of Job, David, and Iſaiah. In the compoſitions of David there is a great variety of manner. In the ſoft and tender he excels; and in his Pſalms are many lofty paſſages. But in ſtrength of deſcription he yields to Job; in ſublimity, to Iſaiah. Without exception, Iſaiah is the moſt ſublime of all poets. Dr. Lowth compares Iſaiah to Homer, Jeremiah to Simonides, and Ezekiel to Æſchylus. Among the minor prophets, Hoſea, Joel, Micah, Habakkuk, and eſpecially Nahum, are diſtinguiſhed for poetical ſpirit. In the prophecies of Daniel and Jonah there is no poetry.

The book of Job is extremely ancient; the author uncertain; and it is remarkable, that it has no connexion with the affairs or manners of the Hebrews. It is the moſt deſcriptive of all the ſacred poems. A peculiar glow of fancy and ſtrength of deſcription characteriſe the author; and no writer abounds ſo much in metaphors. He renders viſible, whatever he

treats. The ſcene is laid in the land of Uz, or Idumæa, which is a part of Arabia; and the imagery employed differs from that which is peculiar to the Hebrews.

EPIC POETRY.

OF all poetical works the epic poem is the moſt dignified. To contrive a ſtory which is entertaining, important, and inſtructive; to enrich it with happy incidents; to enliven it by a variety of characters and deſcriptions; and to maintain a uniform propriety of ſentiment, and a due elevation of ſtyle, are the higheſt efforts of poetical genius.

An epic poem is the recital of ſome illuſtrious enterprife in a poetical form. Epic poetry is of a moral nature; and tends to the promotion of virtue. With this view it acts by extending our ideas of perfection, and exciting admiration. Now this is accompliſhed only by proper repreſentations of heroic deeds and virtuous characters. Valour, truth, juſtice, fidelity, friendſhip, piety, and magnanimity, are objects which the epic muſe preſents to our minds in the moſt ſplendid and honourable colours.

Epic compoſition is diſtinguiſhed from hiſtory by its poetical form, and its liberty of fiction. It is a more calm compoſition than tragedy. It requires a grave, equal, and ſupported dignity. On ſome occaſions it demands the pathetic and the violent; and it embraces a greater compaſs of time and action than dramatic writing admits.

The action or ſubject of an epic poem muſt have three properties. It muſt be one; it muſt be great; it muſt be intereſting. One action or enterpriſe muſt conſtitute its ſubject. Ariſtotle inſiſts on unity as eſſential to epic poetry; becauſe independent facts never affect ſo deeply, as a tale that is one and connected. Virgil has choſen for his ſubject the eſtabliſhment of Æneas in Italy; and the anger of Achilles, with its conſequences, is the ſubject of the Iliad.

It is not however to be underſtood, that epic unity excludes all epiſodes. On the contrary, critics conſider them as great ornaments of epic poetry. They diverſify the ſubject, and relieve the reader by ſhifting the ſcene. Thus Hector's viſit to Andromache in the Iliad, and Erminia's adventure with the ſhepherd in the ſeventh book of the Jeruſalem, afford us a well-judged and pleaſing retreat from camps and battles.

Secondly, the ſubject of an epic poem muſt be ſo great and ſplendid, as to fix attention, and to juſtify the magnificent apparatus the poet beſtows on it. The ſubject ſhould alſo be of ancient date. Both Lucan and Voltaire have tranſgreſſed this rule. By confining himſelf too ſtrictly to hiſtorical truth, the former does not pleaſe; and the latter has improperly mingled well-known events with fictitious. Hence they exhibit not that greatneſs which the epic requires.

The third requiſite in an epic ſubject is, that it be intereſting. This depends in a great meaſure upon the choice of it. But it depends much more upon the ſkilful management of the poet. He muſt ſo frame his plan, as to comprehend many affecting incidents. He muſt ſometimes dazzle with valiant achievements; ſometimes he muſt be awful and auguſt; of-

ten tender and pathetic ; and he muſt ſometimes give us gentle and pleaſing ſcenes of love, friendſhip, and affection.

To render the ſubject intereſting, much alſo depends upon the dangers and obſtacles which muſt be encountered. It is by the management of theſe, that the poet muſt rouſe attention, and hold his reader in ſuſpenſe and agitation.

It is generally ſuppoſed by critics, that an epic poem ſhould conclude ſucceſsfully ; as an unhappy concluſion depreſſes the mind. Indeed it is on the proſperous ſide, that epic poets generally conclude. But two authors of great name, Milton and Lucan, hold the contrary courſe. The one concludes with the ſubverſion of Roman liberty ; and the other with the expulſion of man from Paradiſe.

No preciſe boundaries can be fixed for the duration of the epic action. The action of the Iliad laſts, according to Boſſu, only forty-ſeven days. The action of the Odyſſey extends to eight years and a half ; and that of the Æneid includes about ſix years.

The perſonages in an epic poem ſhould be proper and well ſupported. They ſhould diſplay the features of human nature ; and may admit different degrees of virtue, and even vice ; though the principal characters ſhould be ſuch as will raiſe admiration and love. Poetic characters are of two ſorts, general and particular. General characters are ſuch as are wiſe, brave, and virtuous, without any farther diſtinction. Particular characters expreſs the ſpecies of bravery, of wiſdom, and of virtue, for which any one is remarkable. In this diſcrimination of characters, Homer excels. Taſſo approaches the neareſt to him in this reſpect ; and Virgil is the moſt deficient.

Among epic poets it is the practice to select some perſonage as the hero of the tale. This renders the unity of the ſubject more perfect, and contributes highly to the intereſt and perfection of this ſpecies of writing. It has been aſked, Who then is the hero of Paradiſe Loſt? The devil, ſay ſome critics, who affect to be pleaſant againſt Milton. But they miſtake his intention by ſuppoſing that whoever is triumphant in the cloſe, muſt be the hero of the poem. For Adam is Milton's hero; that is, the capital and moſt intereſting figure in his poem.

In epic poetry there are beſide human characters gods and ſupernatural beings. This forms what is called the machinery of epic poetry; and the French ſuppoſe this eſſential to the nature of an epic poem. They hold that in every epic compoſition the main action is neceſſarily carried on by the intervention of gods. But there ſeems to be no ſolid reaſon for their opinion. Lucan has no gods, nor ſupernatural agents. The author of Leonidas alſo has no machinery.

But, though machinery is not abſolutely neceſſary to the epic plan, it ought not to be totally excluded from it. The marvellous has a great charm for moſt readers. It leads to ſublime deſcription, and fills the imagination. At the ſame time it becomes a poet to be temperate in the uſe of ſupernatural machinery; and ſo to employ the religious faith or ſuperſtition of his country, as to give an air of probability to events moſt contrary to the common courſe of nature.

With regard to the allegorical perſonages, fame, diſcord, love, and the like, they form the worſt kind of machinery. In deſcription they may ſometimes be allowed; but they ſhould never bear any part in the action of the poem. As they are only mere names of

general ideas, they ought not to be conſidered as perſons; and cannot mingle with human actors without an intolerable confuſion of ſhadows with realities.

In the narration of the poet, it is of little conſequence, whether he relate the whole ſtory in his own character, or introduce one of his perſonages to relate a part of the action that paſſed before the poem opens. Homer follows one method in his Iliad, and the other in his Odyſſey. It is to be obſerved however that, if the narrative be given by any of the actors, it gives the poet greater liberty of ſpreading out ſuch parts of the ſubject as he inclines to dwell upon in perſon, and of compriſing the reſt within a ſhort recital. When the ſubject is of great extent, and comprehends the tranſactions of ſeveral years, as in the Odyſſey and Æneid, this method ſeems preferable. But, when the ſubject is of ſmaller compaſs and ſhorter duration, as in the Iliad and Jeruſalem, the poet may, without diſadvantage, relate the whole in his own perſon.

What is of moſt importance in the narration is, that it be perſpicuous, animated, and enriched with every poetic beauty. No ſort of compoſition requires more ſtrength, dignity, and fire, than an epic poem. It is the region in which we look for every thing ſublime in deſcription, tender in ſentiment, and bold or lively in expreſſion. The ornaments of epic poetry are grave and chaſte. Nothing looſe, ludicrous, or affected, finds place there. All the objects it preſents ought to be great, tender, or pleaſing. Deſcriptions of diſguſting or ſhocking objects are to be avoided. Hence the fable of the Harpies in the Æneid, and the allegory of Sin and Death in Paradiſe Loſt, ſhould have been omitted.

HOMER's ILIAD AND ODYSSEY.

THE father of epic poetry is Homer; and in order to reliſh him, we muſt diveſt ourſelves of modern ideas of dignity and refinement, and tranſport our imagination almoſt three thouſand years back in the hiſtory of mankind. The reader is to expect a picture of the ancient world. The two great characters of Homer's poetry are fire and ſimplicity. But, to have a clear idea of his merit, let us conſider the Iliad under the three heads of the ſubject or action, the characters, and the narration.

The ſubject of the Iliad is happily choſen. For no ſubject could be more ſplendid than the Trojan war. A great confederacy of the Grecian ſtates and ten years' ſiege of Troy muſt have ſpread far abroad the renown of many military exploits, and given an extenſive intereſt to the heroes who were concerned in them. Upon theſe traditions, Homer grounded his poem; and, as he lived two or three centuries after the Trojan war, he had full liberty to intermingle fable with hiſtory. He choſe not, however, the whole Trojan war for his ſubject; but with great judgment ſelected the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon, which includes the moſt intereſting period of the war. He has thus given greater unity to his poem. He has gained one hero, or principal character, that is, Achilles; and ſhown the pernicious effects of diſcord among confederated princes.

The praiſe of high invention has in every age been juſtly given to Homer. His incidents, ſpeeches, characters, divine and human; his battles, his little hiſtory pieces of the perſons ſlain, diſcover a boundleſs invention. Nor is his judgment leſs worthy of praiſe. His ſtory is conducted with great art. He riſes upon us gradually. His heroes are introduced with exquiſite ſkill to our acquaintance. The diſtreſs thickens as the poem advances; every thing ſerves to aggrandize Achilles, and to make him the capital figure.

In characters, Homer is without a rival. He abounds in dialogue and converſation, and this produces a ſpirited exhibition of his perſonages. This dramatic method, however, though more natural, expreſſive, and animated, is leſs grave and majeſtic than narrative. Some of Homer's ſpeeches are unſeaſonable, and others trifling. With the Greek vivacity he has alſo ſome of the Greek loquacity.

In no character perhaps does he diſplay greater art, than in that of Helen. Notwithſtanding her frailty and crimes, he contrives to make her an intereſting object. The admiration with which the old generals behold her, when ſhe is coming toward them; her veiling herſelf and ſhedding tears in the preſence of Priam; her grief at the ſight of Menelaus; her upbraiding of Paris for his cowardice, and her returning fondneſs for him, are exquiſite ſtrokes, and worthy of a great maſter.

Homer has been accuſed of making Achilles too brutal a character; and critics ſeem to have adopted this cenſure from two lines of Horace:

> Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,
> Jura negat ſibi nata; nihil non arrogat armis.

It appears that Horace went beyond the truth. Achilles is paſſionate; but he is not a contemner of law. He has reaſon on his ſide; for, though he diſcovers too much heat, it muſt be allowed that he had been notoriouſly wronged. Beſide bravery and contempt of death, he has the qualities of openneſs and ſincerity. He loves his ſubjects, and reſpects the gods. He is warm in his friendſhips; and throughout he is high-ſpirited, gallant and honourable.

Homer's gods make a great figure; but his machinery was not his own invention. He followed the traditions of his country. But, though his machinery is often lofty and magnificent, yet his gods are often deficient in dignity. They have all the human paſſions; they drink, and feaſt, and are vulnerable, like men. While, however, he at times degrades his divinities, he knows how to make them appear with moſt awful majeſty. Jupiter for the moſt part is introduced with great dignity; and ſeveral of the moſt ſublime conceptions in the Iliad are founded on the appearances of Neptune, Minerva, and Appollo.

The ſtyle of Homer is eaſy, natural, and highly animated. Of all the great poets, he is the moſt ſimple in his ſtyle, and reſembles moſt the ſtyle of the poetical parts of the Old Teſtament. Pope's tranſlation of him affords no idea of his manner. His verſification however is allowed to be uncommonly melodious; and to carry beyond that of any poet reſemblance of ſound to ſenſe.

In narration, Homer is always conciſe and deſcriptive. He paints his objects in a manner to our ſight. His battles are ſingularly admirable. We ſee them

in all their hurry, terror, and confuſion. In ſimiles no poet abounds ſo much. His compariſons, however, taken in general, are not his greateſt beauties; they come upon us in too quick ſucceſſion; and often diſturb his narration or deſcription. His lions, bulls, eagles, and herds of ſheep, recur too frequently.

The criticiſm of Longinus upon the Odyſſey is not without foundation; that in this poem Homer may be likened to the ſetting ſun, whoſe grandeur remains without the heat of his meridian beams. It wants the vigour and ſublimity of the Iliad; yet poſſeſſes ſo many beauties, as to be juſtly entitled to high praiſe. It is a very amuſing poem, and has much greater variety than the Iliad. It contains many intereſting ſtories, and pleaſing pictures of ancient manners. Inſtead of the ferocity which pervades the Iliad, it preſents us moſt amiable images of humanity and hoſpitality. It entertains us with many a wonderful adventure, and many a landſcape of nature; and inſtructs us by a rich vein of morality and virtue, running through every part of the poem.

There are ſome defects however in the Odyſſey. Many of its ſcenes fall below the majeſty of an epic poem. The laſt twelve books are in many places languid and tedious; and perhaps the poet is not happy in the diſcovery of Ulyſſes to Penelope. She is too cautious and diſtruſtful; and we meet not that joyous ſurpriſe, expected on ſuch an occaſion.

THE ÆNEID OF VIRGIL.

THE diſtinguiſhing excellencies of the Æneid are elegance and tenderneſs. Virgil is leſs animated and leſs ſublime than Homer; but he has fewer negligencies, greater variety, and more dignity. The Æneid has all the correctneſs and improvements of the Auguſtan age. We meet no contention of heroes about a female ſlave; no violent ſcolding, nor abuſive language; but the poem opens with the utmoſt magnificence.

The ſubject of the Æneid, which is the eſtabliſhment of Æneas in Italy, is extremely happy. Nothing could be more intereſting to the Romans than Virgil's deriving their origin from ſo famous a hero as Æneas. The object was ſplendid itſelf; it gave the poet a theme, taken from the traditionary hiſtory of his country; it allowed him to adopt Homer's mythology; and afforded him frequent opportunities of glancing at all the future great exploits of the Romans, and of deſcribing Italy in its ancient and fabulous ſtate.

Unity of action is perfectly preſerved in the Æneid. The ſettlement of Æneas in Italy by order of the gods is conſtantly kept in view. The epiſodes are properly linked to the main ſubject; and the nodus or intrigue of the poem is happily formed. The wrath of Juno, who oppoſes Æneas, gives riſe to all his difficulties, and connects the human with the celeſtial operations through the whole poem.

Great art and judgment are displayed in the Æneid; but even Virgil is not without his faults. One is, that he has so few marked characters. Achates, Cloanthes, Gyas, and other Trojan heroes, who accompanied Æneas into Italy, are undistinguished figures. Even Æneas himself is not a very interesting hero. He is described, indeed, as pious and brave; but his character is not marked by those strokes that touch the heart. The character of Dido is the best supported in the whole Æneid. Her warmth of passion, keenness of resentment, and violence of character, exhibit a more animated figure than any other Virgil has drawn.

The management of the subject also is in some respects exceptionable. The six last books received not the finishing hand of the author; and for this reason he ordered his poem to be committed to the flames. The wars with the Latins are in dignity inferior to the more interesting objects previously presented to us; and the reader is tempted to take part with Turnus against Æneas.

The principal excellency of Virgil, and what he possesses beyond all poets, is tenderness. His soul was full of sensibility. He felt himself all the affecting circumstances in the scenes he describes; and knew how by a single stroke to reach the heart. In an epic poem, this merit is next to sublimity. The second book of the Æneid is one of the greatest master-pieces ever executed. The death of old Priam, and the family-pieces of Æneas, Anchises, and Creusa, are as tender as can be conceived. In the fourth book, the unhappy passion and death of Dido are admirable. The interview of Æneas with Andromache and He-

lenus in the third book; the episodes of Pallas and Evander, of Nisus and Euryalus, of Lausus and Mezentius, are all striking instances of the power of raising the tender emotions. The best and most finished books are the first, second, fourth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and twelfth.

Virgil's battles are in fire and sublimity far inferior to Homer's. But in one important episode, the descent into hell, he has outdone Homer in the Odyssey by many degrees. There is nothing in all antiquity, equal in its kind to the sixth book of the Æneid. The scenery, the objects, and the description, are great, solemn and sublime.

With regard to the comparative merit of these two great princes of epic poetry, it must be allowed that Homer was the greater genius, and Virgil the more correct writer. Homer is more original, more bold, more sublime, and more forcible. In judgment they are both eminent. Homer has all the Greek vivacity; Virgil all the Roman statelineſs. The imagination of Homer is the most copious; that of Virgil the most correct. The strength of the former lies in warming the fancy; that of the latter in touching the heart. Homer's style is more simple and animated; Virgil's more elegant and uniform.

LUCAN's PHARSALIA.

LUCAN is inferior to Homer and Virgil; yet he deserves attention. There is little invention in his Pharsalia; and it is conducted in too historical

a manner to be ſtrictly epic. It may be arranged, however, in the epic claſs, as it treats of great and heroic adventures. The ſubject of the Pharſalia has all the epic dignity and grandeur; and it poſſeſſes unity of object, viz. the triumph of Cæſar over Roman liberty.

But, though the ſubject of Lucan is confeſſedly heroic, it has two defects. Civil wars preſent objects too ſhocking for epic poetry, and furniſh odious and diſguſting views of human nature. But Lucan's genius ſeems to delight in ſavage ſcenes.

The other defect of Lucan's ſubject is, that it was too near the time in which he lived. This deprived him of the aſſiſtance of fiction and machinery; and thereby rendered his work leſs ſplendid and amuſing. The facts on which he founds his poem, were too well known, and too recent to admit fables and the interpoſition of gods.

The characters of Lucan are drawn with ſpirit and force. But, though Pompey is his hero, he has not made him very intereſting. He marks not Pompey by any high diſtinction, either for magnanimity or valour. He is always ſurpaſſed by Cæſar. Cato is Lucan's favourite character; and, whenever he introduces him, he riſes above himſelf.

In managing his ſtory, Lucan confines himſelf too much to chronological order. This breaks the thread of his narration, and hurries him from place to place. He is alſo too digreſſive; frequently quitting his ſubject, to give us ſome geographical deſcription, or philoſophical diſquiſition.

There are ſeveral poetical and ſpirited deſcriptions in the Pharſalia; but the ſtrength of this poet does

not lie either in narration or deſcription. His narration is often dry and harſh; his deſcriptions are often overwrought, and employed on diſagreeable objects. His chief merit conſiſts in his ſentiments; which are noble, ſtriking, glowing, and ardent. He is the moſt philoſophical, and the moſt patriotic poet of antiquity. He was a ſtoic; and the ſpirit of that philoſophy breathes through his poem. He is elevated and bold; and abounds in well-timed exclamations and apoſtrophes.

As his vivacity and fire are great, he is apt to be carried away by them. His great defect is want of moderation. He knows not where to ſtop. When he would aggrandize his objects, he becomes tumid and unnatural. There is much bombaſt in his poem. His taſte is marked with the corruption of his age; and, inſtead of poetry, he often exhibits declamation.

On the whole, however, he is an author of lively and original genius. His high ſentiments and his fire ſerve to atone for many of his defects. His genius had ſtrength, but no tenderneſs, nor amenity. Compared with Virgil, he has more fire and ſublimer ſentiments; but in every thing elſe falls infinitely below him, particularly in purity, elegance, and tenderneſs.

Statius and Silius Italicus, though poets of the epic claſs, are too inconſiderable for particular criticiſm.

TASSO's JERUSALEM.

JERUSALEM DELIVERED is a ſtrictly regular epic poem and abounds with beauties. The ſubject is the recovery of Jeruſalem from Infidels by the united powers of Chriſtendom. The enterprize was ſplendid, venerable, and heroic; and an intereſting contraſt is exhibited between the Chriſtians and Saracens. Religion renders the ſubject auguſt, and opens a natural field for machinery and ſublime deſcription. The action too lies in a country, and in a period of time, ſufficiently remote to admit an intermixture of fable with hiſtory.

Rich invention is a capital quality in Taſſo. He is full of events, finely diverſified. He never fatigues his reader by mere war and fighting. He frequently ſhifts the ſcene; and from camps and battles tranſports us to more pleaſing objects. Sometimes the ſolemnities of religion; ſometimes the intrigues of love; at other times the adventures of a journey, or the incidents of paſtoral life, relieve and entertain the reader. The work at the ſame time is artfully connected; and, in the midſt of variety, there is perfect unity of plan.

Many characters enliven the poem; and theſe diſtinctly marked and well ſupported. Godfrey, the leader of the enterpriſe, is prudent, moderate, and brave; Tancred amorous, generous, and gallant. Rinaldo, who is properly the hero of the poem, is paſſionate and reſentful; but full of zeal, honour, and heroiſm. Solyman is high-minded; Erminia tender;

Armida artful and violent, and Clorinda maſculine. In drawing characters, Taſſo is ſuperior to Virgil, and yields to no poet but Homer.

He abounds in machinery. When celeſtial beings interpoſe, his machinery is noble. But devils, enchanters, and conjurors act too great a part throughout his poem. In general, the marvellous is carried to extravagance. The poet was too great an admirer of the romantic ſpirit of knight-errantry.

In deſcribing magnificent objects, his ſtyle is firm and majeſtic. In gay and pleaſing deſcription, it is ſoft and inſinuating. Erminia's paſtoral retreat in the ſeventh book, and the arts and beauty of Armida in the fourth book, are exquiſitely beautiful. His battles are animated, and properly varied by incidents. It is rather by actions, characters, and deſcriptions, that he intereſts us, than by the ſentimental part of his work. He is far inferior to Virgil in tenderneſs; and, when he aims at being ſentimental and pathetic, he is apt to become artificial.

It has often been objected to Taſſo, that he abounds in point and conceit; but this cenſure has been carried too far. For, in his general character, he is maſculine and ſtrong. The humour of decrying him paſſed from the French critics to thoſe of England. But their ſtrictures are founded either in ignorance or prejudice. For the *Jeruſalem* is, in my opinion, the third regular epic poem in the world; and ſtands next to the Iliad and Æneid. In ſimplicity and fire, Taſſo is inferior to Homer; in tenderneſs to Virgil; in ſublimity to Milton; but for fertility of invention, variety of incidents, expreſſion of characters, richneſs of deſcription, and beauty of ſtyle, no poet, except the three juſt named, can be compared to him.

THE LUSIAD OF CAMOENS.

THE Portugueſe boaſt of Camoens, as the Italians do of Taſſo. The diſcovery of the Eaſt Indies by Vaſco de Gama, an enterprife alike ſplendid and intereſting, is the ſubject of the poem of Camoens. The adventures, diſtreſſes, and actions of Vaſco and his countrymen, are well fancied and deſcribed; and the Luſiad is conducted on the epic plan. The incidents of the poem are magnificent; and, joined with ſome wildneſs and irregularity, there is diſplayed in it much poetic ſpirit, ſtrong fancy, and bold deſcription. In the poem, however, there is no attempt toward painting characters. Vaſco is the hero, and the only perſonage that makes any figure.

The machinery of the Luſiad is perfectly extravagant; being formed of an odd mixture of Chriſtian ideas and Pagan mythology. Pagan divinities appear to be the deities; and Chriſt and the Holy Virgin to be inferior agents. One great object, however, of the Portugueſe expedition is to extend the empire of Chriſtianity, and to extirpate Mahometaniſm. In this religious undertaking the chief protector of the Portugueſe is Venus, and their great adverſary is Bacchus. Jupiter is introduced, as foretelling the downfal of Mahomet. Vaſco during a ſtorm implores the aid of Chriſt and the Virgin; and in return to this prayer Venus appears, and, diſcovering the ſtorm to be the work of Bacchus, complains to Jupiter, and procures the winds to be calmed. All this is moſt prepoſter-

ous; but, toward the end of his work, the poet offers an awkward apology for his mythology; making the goddeſs Thetes inform Vaſco that ſhe and the other heathen divinities are no more than names to deſcribe the operations of Providence.

In the Luſiad, however, there is ſome fine machinery of a different kind. The appearance of the genius of the river Ganges in a dream to Emanuel, king of Portugal, inviting him to diſcover his ſecret ſprings, and acquainting him that he was the monarch, deſtined to enjoy the treaſures of the Eaſt, is a happy idea. But in the fifth canto the poet diſplays his nobleſt conception of this ſort, where Vaſco recounts to the king of Melinda all the wonders of his voyage. He tells him that, when the fleet arrived at the Cape of Good Hope, which had never been doubled before by any navigator, there appeared to them ſuddenly a huge phantom, riſing out of the ſea in the midſt of tempeſt and thunder, with a head that reached the clouds, and a countenance, that filled them with terror. This was the genius of that hitherto unknown ocean; and he menaced them in a voice of thunder for invading thoſe unknown ſeas; foretelling the calamities that were to befal them, if they ſhould proceed; and then with a mighty noiſe diſappeared. This is a very ſolemn and ſtriking piece of machinery; and ſhows that Camoens was a poet of a bold and lofty imagination.

THE TELEMACHUS OF FENELON.

IT would be unpardonable in a review of epic poets to forget the amiable Fenelon. His work, though in prose, is a poem; and the plan in general is well contrived, having epic grandeur and unity of action. He employs the ancient mythology; and excels in application of it. There is great richness as well as beauty in his descriptions. To soft and calm scenes, his genius is more peculiarly suited; such as the incidents of pastoral life, the pleasures of virtue, or a country flourishing in peace.

His first books are eminently excellent. The adventures of Calypso are the chief beauty of his work. Vivacity and interest join in the narration. In the books which follow, there is less happiness in the execution, and an apparent languor. The author in warlike adventures is most unfortunate.

Some critics have refused to rank this work among epic poems. Their objection arises from the minute details it exhibits of virtuous policy, and from the discourses of Mentor, which recur too frequently, and too much in the strain of common-place morality. To these peculiarities, however, the author was led by the design with which he wrote, that of forming a young prince to the cares and duties of a virtuous monarch.

Several epic poets have described a descent into hell; and in the prospects they have given us of the invisible world, we may observe the gradual refinement in the opinions of men concerning a future state

of rewards and punishments. Homer's descent of Ulysses into hell is indistinct and dreary. The scene is in the country of the Cimmerians, which is always covered with clouds and darkness; and, when the spirits of the dead appear, we hardly know whether Ulysses is above or below ground. The ghosts too, even of the heroes, appear dissatisfied with their condition.

In Virgil, the descent into hell discovers great refinement, corresponding to the progress of philosophy. The objects are more distinct, grand, and awful. There is a fine description of the separate mansions of good and bad spirits. Fenelon's visit of Telemachus to the shades is still much more philosophical than Virgil's. He refines the ancient mythology by his knowledge of the true religion, and adorns it with that beautiful enthusiasm, for which he is so remarkable. His relation of the happiness of the just is an excellent description in the mystic strain.

THE HENRIADE OF VOLTAIRE.

THE Henriade is without doubt a regular epic poem. In several places of this work, Voltaire discovers that boldness of conception, that vivacity and liveliness of expression, by which he is so much distinguished. Several of his comparisons are new and happy. But the Henriade is not his master-piece. In the tragic line he has certainly been more successful, than in the epic. French versification is illy suited to epic poetry.

It is not only fettered by rhyme, but wants elevation. Hence not only feebleneſs, but ſometimes proſaic flatneſs in the ſtyle. The poem conſequently languiſhes; and the reader is not animated by that ſpirit which is inſpired by a ſublime compoſition of the epic kind.

The triumph of Henry IV. over the arms of the League is the ſubject of the Henriade. The action of the poem properly includes only the ſiege of Paris. It is an action perfectly epic; and conducted with due regard to unity, and to the rules of critics. But it has great defects. It is founded on civil wars; and preſents to the mind thoſe odious objects, maſſacres and aſſaſſinations. It is alſo of too recent date, and too much within the bounds of well-known hiſtory. The author has farther erred by mixing fiction with truth. The poem, for inſtance, opens with a voyage of Henry's to England, and an interview between him and Queen Elizabeth; though Henry never ſaw England, nor ever converſed with Elizabeth. In ſubjects of ſuch notoriety a fiction of this kind ſhocks every intelligent reader.

A great deal of machinery is employed by Voltaire for the purpoſe of embelliſhing his poem. But it is of the worſt kind, that of allegorical beings. Diſcord, cunning, and love appear as perſonages, and mix with human actors. This is contrary to all rational criticiſm. Ghoſts, angels, and devils, have a popular exiſtence; but every one knows that allegorical beings are no more than repreſentations of human paſſions and diſpoſitions; and ought not to have place, as actors, in a poem which relates to human tranſactions.

In juſtice however it muſt be obſerved, that the machinery of St. Louis poſſeſſes real dignity. The proſpect of the inviſible world, which St. Louis gives to

Henry in a dream, is the fineſt paſſage in the Henriade. Death bringing the ſouls of the departed in ſucceſſion before God, and the palace of the deſtinies opened to Henry, are ſtriking and magnificent objects.

Though ſome of Voltaire's epiſodes are properly extended, his narration is too general. The events are ſuperficially related, and too much crowded. The ſtrain of ſentiment, however, which pervades the Henriade, is high and noble.

MILTON's PARADISE LOST.

MILTON chalked out a new and very extraordinary courſe. As ſoon as we open his Paradiſe Loſt, we are introduced into an inviſible world, and ſurrounded by celeſtial and infernal beings. Angels and devils are not his machinery, but his principal actors. What in any other work would be the marvellous, is in this the natural courſe of events; and doubts may ariſe, whether his poem be ſtrictly an epic compoſition. But, whether it be ſo or not, it is certainly one of the higheſt efforts of poetical genius; and in one great characteriſtic of epic poetry, majeſty and ſublimity, is equal to any that bears this name.

The ſubject of his poem led Milton upon difficult ground. If it had been more human and leſs theological; if his occurrences had been more connected with real life; if he had afforded a greater diſplay of the characters and paſſions of men; his poem would have been more pleaſing to moſt readers. His ſubject however was peculiarly ſuited to the daring ſublimity of his genius. As he alone was fitted for it, ſo he

has ſhown in the conduct of it a wonderful ſtretch of imagination and invention. From a few hints, given in the ſacred ſcriptures, he has raiſed a regular ſtructure, and filled his poem with a variety of incidents. He is ſometimes dry and harſh; and too often the metaphyſician and divine. But the general tenor of his work is intereſting, elevated, and affecting. The artful change of his objects, and the ſcene, laid now in heaven, now on earth, and now in hell, afford ſufficient diverſity; while unity of plan is perfectly ſupported. Calm ſcenes are exhibited in the employments of Adam and Eve in Paradiſe; and buſy ſcenes, and great actions, in the enterpriſes of Satan, and in the wars of angels. The amiable innocence of our firſt parents, and the proud ambition of Satan, afford a happy contraſt through the whole poem, which gives it an uncommon charm. But the concluſion perhaps is too tragic for epic poetry.

The ſubject naturally admits no great diſplay of characters; but ſuch as could be introduced, are properly ſupported. Satan makes a ſtriking figure; and is the beſt drawn character in the poem. Milton has artfully given him a mixed character, not altogether void of ſome good qualities. He is brave, and faithful to his troops. Amid his impiety, he is not without remorſe. He is even touched with pity for our firſt parents; and from the neceſſity of his ſituation, juſtifies his deſign againſt them. He is actuated by ambition and reſentment, rather than by pure malice. The characters of Beelzebub, Moloch, and Belial, are well painted. The good angels, though deſcribed with dignity, have more uniformity of character. Among them however the mild condeſcenſion of Raphael, and the tried fidelity of Abdiel, form proper

characteriſtic diſtinctions. The attempt to deſcribe God Almighty himſelf was too bold, and accordingly moſt unſucceſsful. The innocence of our firſt parents is delicately painted. In ſome ſpeeches perhaps Adam appears too knowing and refined for his ſituation. Eve is hit off more happily. Her gentleneſs, modeſty, and frailty, are expreſſively characteriſtic of the female character.

Milton's great and diſtinguiſhing excellence is his ſublimity. In this, perhaps, he excels even Homer. The firſt and ſecond books of Paradiſe Loſt, are almoſt a continued ſeries of the higheſt ſublime. But his ſublimity differs from that of Homer; which is always accompanied by impetuoſity and fire. The ſublime of Milton is a calm and amazing grandeur. Homer warms and hurries us along; Milton fixes us in a ſtate of elevation and aſtoniſhment. Homer's ſublimity appears moſt in his deſcription of actions; Milton's in that of wonderful and ſtupendous objects.

But, while Milton excels moſt in ſublimity, his work abounds in the beautiful, the pleaſing, and the tender. When the ſcene is in Paradiſe, the imagery is gay and ſmiling. His deſcriptions ſhow a fertile imagination; and in his ſimiles he is remarkably happy. If faulty, it is from their too frequent alluſions to matters of learning, and to ancient fables. It muſt alſo be confeſſed, that there is a falling off in the latter part of Paradiſe Loſt.

The language and verſification of Milton have high merit. His blank verſe is harmonious and diverſified; and his ſtyle is full of majeſty. There may be found indeed ſome proſaic lines in his poem. But in a work ſo long and ſo harmonious theſe may be forgiven.

Paradiſe Loſt, amid beauties of every kind, has many inequalities. No high and daring genius was ever uniformly correct. Milton is too frequently theological and metaphyſical; his words are often technical; and he is affectedly oſtentatious of his learning. Many of his faults however are to be imputed to the pedantry of his age. He diſcovers a vigour, a graſp of genius, equal to every thing great; ſometimes he riſes above every other poet; and ſometimes he falls below himſelf.

DRAMATIC POETRY. TRAGEDY.

In all civilized nations dramatic poetry has been a favourite amuſement. It divides itſelf into the two forms of tragedy and comedy. Of theſe, tragedy is the moſt dignified; as great and ſerious objects intereſt us more than little and ludicrous ones. The former reſts on the high paſſions, the virtues, crimes, and ſufferings of mankind; the latter on their humours, follies, and pleaſures; and ridicule is its ſole inſtrument.

Tragedy is a direct imitation of human manners and actions. It does not, like an epic poem, exhibit characters by deſcription or narration; it ſets the perſonages before us, and makes them act and ſpeak with propriety. This ſpecies of writing therefore requires deep knowledge of the human heart; and, when happily executed, it has the power of raiſing the ſtrongeſt emotions.

In its general ſtrain and ſpirit, tragedy is favourable to virtue. Characters of honour claim our reſpect and

approbation; and, to raise indignation, we must paint a person in the odious colours of vice and depravity. Virtuous men, indeed, are often represented by the tragic poet as unfortunate; for this happens in real life. But he always engages our hearts in their behalf; and never represents vice as finally triumphant and happy. Upon the same principle, if bad men succeed in their designs, they are yet finally conducted to punishment. It may therefore be concluded that tragedies are moral compositions.

It is affirmed by Aristotle, that the design of tragedy is to purge our passions by means of pity and terror. But perhaps it would have been more accurate, to have said, that the object of this species of composition is to improve our virtuous sensibility. If a writer excite our pity for the afflicted, inspire us with proper sentiments on beholding the vicissitudes of life, and stimulate us to avoid the misfortunes of others by exhibiting their errors, he has accomplished all the moral purposes of tragedy.

In a tragedy it is necessary to have an interesting story, and that the writer conduct it in a natural and probable manner. For the end of tragedy is not so much to elevate the imagination, as to affect the heart. This principle, which is founded on the clearest reason, excludes from tragedy all machinery, or fabulous intervention of gods. Ghosts alone from their foundation in popular belief, have maintained their place in tragedy.

To promote an impression of probability, the story of a tragedy, according to some critics, should never be a pure fiction, but ought to be built on real facts. This, however, is carrying the matter too far. For a fictitious tale, if properly conducted, will melt the

heart as much as real hiſtory. Hence the tragic poet mixes many fictitious circumſtances with well-known facts. Moſt readers never think of ſeparating the hiſtorical from the fabulous. They attend only to what is probable, and are touched by events, that reſemble nature. Accordingly ſome of the moſt affecting tragedies are entirely fictitious in their ſubjects. Such are the Fair Penitent, Douglas, and the Orphan.

In its origin, tragedy was rude and imperfect. Among the Greeks it was at firſt nothing more than the ſong which was ſung at the feſtival of Bacchus. Theſe ſongs were ſometimes ſung by the whole company, and ſometimes by ſeparate bands, anſwering alternately to each other, and making a chorus. To give this entertainment ſome variety, Theſpis, who lived about five hundred years before the Chriſtian era, introduced a perſon between the ſongs, who made a recitation in verſe. Æſchylus, who lived fifty years after him, introduced a dialogue between two perſons or actors, comprehending ſome intereſting ſtory; and placed them on a ſtage adorned with ſcenery. The drama now began to aſſume a regular form; and was ſoon after brought to perfection by Sophocles and Euripides.

It thus appears that the chorus was the foundation of tragedy. But, what is remarkable, the dramatic dialogue, which was only an addition to it, at length became the principal part of the entertainment; and the chorus, loſing its dignity, came to be accounted only an acceſſory in tragedy. At laſt, in modern tragedy, it has entirely diſappeared; and its abſence from the ſtage, forms the chief diſtinction between the ancient and modern drama.

The chorus, it must be allowed, rendered tragedy more magnificent, instructive, and moral. But on the other hand it was unnatural, and lessened the interest of the piece. It removed the representation from the resemblance of life. It has accordingly been with propriety excluded from the stage.

The three unities of action, place, and time, have been considered, as essential to the proper conduct of dramatic fable. Of these three, unity of action is undoubtedly most important. This consists in the relation which all the incidents introduced bear to some design or effect, combining them naturally into one whole. This unity of subject is most essential to tragedy. For a multiplicity of plots, by distracting the attention, prevents the passions from rising to any height. Hence the absurdity of two independent actions in the same play. There may indeed be underplots; but the poet should make these subservient to the main action. They should conspire to bring forward the catastrophe of the play.

Of a separate and independent action, or intrigue, there is a clear example in Addison's Cato. The subject of this tragedy is the death of Cato, a noble personage, and supported by the author with much dignity. But all the love-scenes in the play; the passion of Cato's two sons for Lucia, and that of Juba for Cato's daughter, are mere episodes. They break the unity of the subject, and form a very unseasonable junction of gallantry with high sentiments of patriotism.

Unity of action must not, however, be confounded with simplicity of plot. Unity and simplicity import different things in dramatic composition. The plot is simple, when a small number of incidents is introduc-

ed into it. With reſpect to plots, the ancients were more ſimple than the moderns. The Greek tragedies appear, indeed, to be too naked, and deſtitute of intereſting events. The moderns admit a much greater variety of incidents; which is certainly an improvement, as it renders the entertainment more animated and more inſtructive. It may, however, be carried too far; for an overcharge of action and intrigue produces perplexity and embarraſſment. Of this, the Mourning Bride of Congreve is an example. The incidents ſucceed each other too rapidly; and the cataſtrophe, which ought to be plain and ſimple, is artificial and intricate.

Unity of action muſt be maintained, not only in the general conſtruction of the fable, but in all the acts and ſcenes of the play. The diviſion of every play into five acts is founded merely on common practice, and the authority of Horace:

> Neve minor, neu ſit quinto productior actu
> Fabula.

There is nothing in nature which fixes this rule. On the Greek ſtage the diviſion by acts was unknown. The word act never occurs once in the Poetics of Ariſtotle. Practice, however, has eſtabliſhed this diviſion; and the poet muſt be careful that each act terminate in a proper place. The firſt act ſhould contain a clear expoſition of the ſubject. It ſhould excite curioſity, and introduce the perſonages to the acquaintance of the ſpectators. During the ſecond, third, and fourth acts, the plots ſhould gradually thicken. The paſſions ſhould be kept conſtantly awake. There ſhould be no ſcenes of idle converſation, or mere declamation. The ſuſpenſe and concern of the

ſpectators ſhould be excited more and more. This is the great excellency of Shakeſpeare. Sentiment, paſſion, pity, and terror, ſhould pervade every tragedy.

In the fifth act, which is the ſeat of the cataſtrophe, the author ſhould moſt fully diſplay his art and genius. The firſt requiſite is, that the unravelling of the plot be brought about by probable and natural means. Secondly, the cataſtrophe ſhould be ſimple, depending on few events, and including but few perſons. Paſſionate ſenſibility languiſhes when divided among many objects. Laſtly, in the cataſtrophe every thing ſhould be warm and glowing; and the poet muſt be ſimple, ſerious, and pathetic; uſing no language but that of nature.

It is not eſſential to the cataſtrophe of a tragedy, that it end happily. Sufficient diſtreſs and agitation with many tender emotions may be raiſed in the courſe of the play. But in general the ſpirit of tragedy leans to the ſide of leaving the impreſſion of virtuous ſorrow ſtrong upon the mind.

A curious queſtion here occurs: How happens it that the emotions of ſorrow in tragedy afford gratification to the mind? It ſeems to be the conſtitution of our nature, that all the ſocial paſſions ſhould be attended with pleaſure. Hence nothing is more pleaſing than love and friendſhip. Pity is for wiſe ends a ſtrong inſtinct; and it neceſſarily produces ſome diſtreſs on account of its ſympathy with ſufferers. The heart is at the ſame moment warmed by kindneſs, and afflicted by diſtreſs. Upon the whole, the ſtate of the mind is agreeable. We are pleaſed with ourſelves, not only for our benevolence, but for our ſenſibility. The pain of ſympathy is alſo diminiſhed by recollecting that the diſtreſs is not real; and by the power of action and ſentiment, of language and poetry.

After treating of the acts of a play it is proper to notice the scenes. The entrance of a new person upon the stage, forms what is called a new scene. These scenes, or successive conversations, should be closely connected; and much of the art of dramatic composition consists in maintaining this connexion. For this purpose two rules must be observed. 1. During the course of one act the stage should never be left empty a moment, for this would make a gap in the representation. Whenever the stage is evacuated, the act is closed. This rule is generally observed by French tragedians; but it is much neglected by the English. 2. No person should come upon the stage, or leave it, without some apparent reason. If this rule be neglected, the dramatis personæ are little better than so many puppets; for the drama professes imitation of real transactions.

To unity of action, critics have added the unities of time and place. Unity of place requires the scene never to be shifted; that the action of the play continue in the same place where it began. Unity of time, strictly taken, requires that the time of the action be no longer than the time allowed for the representation of the play. Aristotle however permits the action to comprehend a whole day. These rules are intended to bring the imitation nearer to reality.

Among the Greeks there was no division of acts. In modern times the practice has prevailed of suspending the spectacle some little time between the acts. This practice gives latitude to the imagination, and renders strict confinement to time and place less necessary. Upon this account therefore too strict an observance of these unities should not be preferred to higher beauties of execution, nor to the introduction

of more pathetic ſituations. But tranſgreſſions of theſe unities, though they may be often advantageous, ought not to be too frequent, nor violent. Hurrying the ſpectator from one diſtant city to another, or making ſeveral days or weeks paſs during the repreſentation, would ſhock the imagination too much, and therefore cannot be allowed in a dramatic writer.

Having examined dramatic action, we ſhall now attend to the characters moſt proper to be exhibited in a tragedy. Several critics affirm that the nature of tragedy requires the principal perſonages to be always of high or princely rank; as the ſufferings of ſuch perſons ſeize the heart the moſt forcibly. But this is more ſpecious than ſolid. For the diſtreſſes of Deſdemona, Monimia, and Belvidera, intereſt us as much as if they had been princeſſes or queens. It is ſufficient, that in tragedy there be nothing degrading or mean in the perſonages exhibited. High rank may render the ſpectacle more ſplendid; but it is the tale itſelf, and the art of the poet, that make it intereſting and pathetic.

In deſcribing his characters, the poet ſhould be careful ſo to order the incidents which relate to them, as to impreſs the ſpectators with favourable ideas of virtue, and of the divine adminiſtration. Pity ſhould be raiſed for the virtuous in diſtreſs; and the author ſhould ſtudiouſly beware of making ſuch repreſentations of life as would render virtue an object of averſion.

Unmixed characters, either of good or ill men, are not, in the opinion of Ariſtotle, fit for tragedy. For the diſtreſſes of the former, as unmerited, hurt us; and the ſufferings of the latter excite no compaſſion

Mixed characters afford the beſt field for diſplaying, without injury to morals, the viciſſitudes of life. They intereſt us the moſt deeply; and their diſtreſſes are moſt inſtructive when repreſented as ſpringing out of their own paſſions, or as originating in ſome weakneſs incident to human nature.

The Greek tragedies are often founded on mere deſtiny and inevitable misfortunes. Modern tragedy aims at a higher object, and takes a wider range; as it ſhows the direful effects of ambition, jealouſy, love, reſentment, and every ſtrong emotion. But of all the paſſions which furniſh matter for tragedy, love has moſt occupied the modern ſtage. To the ancient theatre love was almoſt unknown. This proceeded from the national manners of the Greeks, which encouraged a greater ſeparation of the ſexes than takes place in modern times; and did not admit female actors upon the ancient ſtage; a circumſtance which operated againſt the introduction of love ſtories. No ſolid reaſon, however, can be aſſigned for this predominancy of love upon the ſtage. Indeed it not only limits the natural extent of tragedy, but degrades its majeſty. Mixing it with the great and ſolemn revolutions of human fortune, tends to give tragedy the air of gallantry and juvenile entertainment. Without any aſſiſtance from love, the drama is capable of producing its higheſt effects upon the mind.

Beſide the arrangement of his ſubject, and the conduct of his perſonages, the tragic poet muſt attend to the propriety of his ſentiments. Theſe muſt be ſuited to the characters of the perſons to whom they are attributed, and to the ſituations in which they are placed. It is chiefly in the pathetic parts, that the difficulty and importance of this rule are greateſt.

We go to a tragedy, expecting to be moved; and, if the poet cannot reach the heart, he has no tragic merit; and we return cold and disappointed from the performance.

To paint and to excite passion strongly, are prerogatives of genius. They require not only ardent sensibility, but the power of entering deeply into characters. It is here, that candidates for the drama are least successful. A man under the agitation of passion makes known his feelings in the glowing language of sensibility. He does not coolly describe what his feelings are; yet this sort of secondary description tragic poets often give us instead of the primary and native language of passion. Thus in Addison's Cato, when Lucia confesses to Portius her love for him, but swears that she will never marry him, Portius, instead of giving way to the language of grief and astonishment, only describes his feelings:

> Fix'd in astonishment, I gaze upon thee,
> Like one just blasted by a stroke from heaven,
> Who pants for breath, and stiffens yet alive
> In dreadful looks; a monument of wrath.

This might have proceeded from a bystander, or an indifferent person; but it is altogether improper in the mouth of Portius. Similar to this descriptive language are the unnatural and forced thoughts, which tragic poets sometimes employ, to exaggerate the feelings of persons, whom they wish to paint, as strongly moved. Thus, when Jane Shore on meeting her husband in distress, and finding that he had forgiven her, calls on the rains to give her their drops, and to the springs to lend her their streams, that she may have a constant supply of tears; we see plainly that it is not Jane

Shore that ſpeaks; but the poet himſelf, who is ſtraining his fancy, and ſpurring up his genius, to ſay ſomething uncommonly ſtrong and lively.

The language of real paſſion is always plain and ſimple. It abounds indeed in figures, that expreſs a diſturbed and impetuous ſtate of mind; but never employs any for parade and embelliſhment. Thoughts, ſuggeſted by paſſion, are natural and obvious; and not the offſpring of refinement, ſubtilty, and wit. Paſſion neither reaſons, ſpeculates, nor declaims; its language is ſhort, broken, and interrupted. The French tragedians deal too much in refinement and declamation. The Greek tragedians adhere moſt to nature, and are moſt pathetic. This too is the great excellency of Shakeſpeare. He exhibits the true language of nature and paſſion.

Moral ſentiments and reflections ought not to recur very frequently in tragedy. When unſeaſonably crowded, they loſe their effect, and convey an air of pedantry. When introduced with propriety, they give dignity to the compoſition. Cardinal Woolſey's ſoliloquy on his fall is a fine inſtance of the felicity with which they may be employed. Much of the merit of Addiſon's Cato depends on that moral turn of thought which diſtinguiſhes it.

The ſtyle and verſification of tragedy ſhould be free, eaſy, and varied. Engliſh blank verſe is happily ſuited to this ſpecies of compoſition. It has ſufficient majeſty, and can deſcend to the ſimple and familiar; it admits a happy variety of cadence, and is free from the conſtraint and monotony of rhyme. Of the French tragedies it is a great misfortune, that they are always in rhyme. For it fetters the freedom of the

tragic dialogue, fills it with a languid monotony, and is fatal to the power of paſſion.

With regard to thoſe ſplendid compariſons in rhyme, and thoſe ſtrings of couplets, with which it was ſome time ago faſhionable to conclude the acts of a tragedy, and ſometimes the moſt intereſting ſcenes, they are now laid aſide, and regarded not only as childiſh ornaments, but as perfect barbariſms.

GREEK TRAGEDY.

THE plot of Greek tragedy was exceedingly ſimple; the incidents few; and the conduct very exact with regard to the unities of action, time, and place. Machinery, or the invention of gods, was employed; and, what was very faulty, the final unravelling was ſometimes made to turn upon it. Love, one or two inſtances excepted, was never admitted into Greek tragedy. A vein of morality and religion always runs through it; but they employed leſs than the moderns, the combat of the paſſions. Their plots were all taken from the ancient traditionary ſtories of their own nation.

Æſchylus, the father of Greek tragedy, exhibits both the beauties and defects of an early original writer. He is bold, nervous, and animated; but very obſcure, and difficult to be underſtood. His ſtyle is highly metaphorical, and often harſh and tumid. He abounds in martial ideas and deſcriptions, has much fire and elevation, and little tenderneſs. He alſo delights in the marvellous.

The moſt maſterly of the Greek tragedians is Sophocles. He is the moſt correct in the conduct of his ſubjects; the moſt juſt and ſublime in his ſentiments. In deſcriptive talents he is alſo eminent. Euripides is accounted more tender than Sophocles; he is fuller of moral ſentiments; but he is leſs correct in the conduct of his plays. His expoſitions of his ſubjects are leſs artful; and the ſongs of his chorus, though very poetic, are leſs connected with the principal action, than thoſe of Sophocles. Both of them, however, have high merit, as tragic poets. Their ſtyle is elegant and beautiful; and their ſentiments for the moſt part juſt. They ſpeak with the voice of nature; and in the midſt of ſimplicity they are touching and intereſting.

Theatrical repreſentation on the ſtages of Greece and Rome was in many reſpects very ſingular, and widely different from that of modern times. The ſongs of the chorus were accompanied by inſtrumental muſic; and the dialogue part had a modulation of its own, and might be ſet to notes. It has alſo been thought that on the Roman ſtage the pronouncing and geſticulating parts were ſometimes divided, and performed by different actors. The actors in tragedy wore a long robe; they were raiſed upon cothurni, and played in maſks; theſe maſks were painted; and the actor by turning the different profiles exhibited different emotions to the auditors. This contrivance, however, was attended by many diſadvantages.

FRENCH TRAGEDY.

In the compositions of some French dramatic writers, tragedy has appeared with great lustre; particularly Corneille, Racine, and Voltaire. They have improved upon the ancients, by introducing more incidents, a greater variety of passions, and a fuller display of characters. Like the ancients, they excel in regularity of conduct; and their style is poetical and elegant. But to an English taste they want strength and passion, and are too declamatory and refined. They seem afraid of being too tragic; and it was the opinion of Voltaire, that to the perfection of tragedy, it is necessary to unite the vehemence and action of the English theatre with the correctness and decorum of the French.

Corneille, the father of French tragedy, is distinguished by majesty of sentiment and a fruitful imagination. His genius was rich, but more turned to the epic than the tragic vein. He is magnificent and splendid, rather than touching and tender. He is full of declamation, impetuous and extravagant.

In tragedy, Racine is superior to Corneille. He wants, indeed, the copiousness of Corneille; but he is free from his bombast, and excels him greatly in tenderness. The beauty of his language and versification is uncommon; and he has managed his rhymes with superior advantage.

Voltaire is not inferior to his predecessors in the drama; and in one article he has outdone them, the delicate and interesting situations he has introduced.

Here lies his chief ſtrength. Like his predeceſſors, however, he is ſometimes deficient in force, and ſometimes too declamatory. His characters, notwithſtanding, are drawn with ſpirit, his events are ſtriking, and his ſentiments elevated.

ENGLISH TRAGEDY.

IT has often been remarked of tragedy in Great Britain, that it is more ardent than that of France, but more irregular and incorrect. It has, therefore, excelled in the ſoul of tragedy. For the pathetic muſt be allowed to be the chief excellence of the tragic muſe.

The firſt object on the Engliſh theatre, is the great Shakeſpeare. In extent and force of genius, both for tragedy and comedy, he is unrivalled. But at the ſame time it is genius ſhooting wild, deficient in taſte, not always chaſte, and unaſſiſted by art and knowledge. Criticiſm has been exhauſted in commentaries upon him; yet to this day it is undecided, whether his beauties or defects be greateſt. In his writings there are admirable ſcenes and paſſages without number; but there is not one of his plays which can be pronounced a good one. Beſide extreme irregularities in conduct, and groteſque mixtures of the ſerious and comic, we are frequently diſturbed by unnatural thoughts, harſh expreſſions, and a certain obſcure bombaſt, and play upon words. Theſe faults are, however, compenſated by two of the greateſt excellencies a tragic poet can poſſeſs, his lively and diverſified painting of character, and his ſtrong and

natural expreſſions of paſſion. On theſe two virtues his merit reſts. In the midſt of his abſurdities he intereſts and moves us; ſo great is his ſkill in human nature, and ſo lively his repreſentations of it.

He poſſeſſes alſo the merit of having created for himſelf a world of preternatural beings. His witches, ghoſts, fairies, and ſpirits of all kinds, are ſo awful, myſterious, and peculiar, as ſtrongly to affect the imagination. His two maſter pieces are his Othello and Macbeth. With regard to his hiſtorical plays, they are neither tragedies, nor comedies; but a peculiar ſpecies of dramatic entertainment, in which he deſcribes the characters, events, and manners of the times of which he treats.

Since Shakeſpeare, there are few Engliſh dramatic writers, whoſe whole works are entitled to high praiſe. There are ſeveral tragedies, however, of conſiderable merit. Lee's Theodoſius has warmth and tenderneſs, though romantic in the plan, and extravagant in the ſentiments. Otway is great in his Orphan and Venice Preſerved. Perhaps, however, he is too tragic in theſe pieces. He had genius and ſtrong paſſions, but was very indelicate.

The tragedies of Rowe abound in morality and in elevated ſentiments. His poetry is good, and his language pure and elegant. He is, notwithſtanding, too cold and unintereſting; and flowery, rather than tragic. His beſt dramas are Jane Shore and the Fair Penitent, which excel in the tender and pathetic.

Dr. Young's Revenge diſcovers genius and fire; but wants tenderneſs, and turns too much on the direful paſſions. In the Morning Bride of Congreve there are fine ſituations and much good poetry.

The tragedies of Thomſon are too full of a ſtiff morality, which renders them dull and formal. His Tancred and Sigiſmunda is his maſter-piece; and for the plot, characters, and ſentiments, juſtly deſerves a place among the beſt Engliſh tragedies.

A Greek tragedy is a ſimple relation of an intereſting incident. A French tragedy is a ſeries of artful and refined converſations. An Engliſh tragedy is a combat of ſtrong paſſions, ſet before us in all their violence, producing deep diſaſters, and filling the ſpectators with grief. Ancient tragedies are more natural and ſimple; modern more artful and complex.

COMEDY.

THE ſtrain and ſpirit of comedy diſcriminate it ſufficiently from tragedy. While pity, terror, and the other ſtrong paſſions form the province of the latter, the ſole inſtrument of the former is ridicule. Follies and vices, and whatever in the human character is improper, or expoſes to cenſure and ridicule, are objects of comedy. As a ſatirical exhibition of the improprieties and follies of men, it is uſeful and moral. It is commendable by this ſpecies of compoſition to correct and to poliſh the manners of men. Many vices are more ſucceſsfully exploded by ridicule, than by ſerious arguments. It is poſſible however to employ ridicule improperly; and by its operation to do miſchief inſtead of good. For ridicule is far from being a proper teſt of truth. Licentious writers there-

fore of the comic clafs have often caft ridicule on objects and characters which did not deferve it. But this is not the fault of comedy, but of the turn and genius of certain writers. In the hands of loofe men, comedy will miflead and corrupt; but in thofe of virtuous writers, it is not only a gay and innocent, but a laudable and ufeful entertainment. Englifh comedy, however, is frequently a fchool of vice.

The rules of dramatic action, that were prefcribed for tragedy, belong alfo to comedy. A comic writer muft obferve the unities of action, time, and place. He muft attend to nature and probability. The imitation of manners ought to be even more exact in comedy than in tragedy; for the fubjects of comedy are more familiar and better known.

The fubjects of tragedy are confined to no age nor country; but it is otherwife in comedy. For the decorums of behaviour, and the nice difcriminations of character which are the fubjects of comedy, change with time and country; and are never fo well underftood by foreigners, as by natives. We weep for the heroes of Greece and Rome; but we are touched by the ridicule of fuch manners and characters only as we fee and know. The fcene therefore of comedy fhould always be laid in the author's own country and age. The comic poet catches the manners living, as they rife.

It is true, indeed, that Plutus and Terence did not follow this rule. The fcene of their comedies is laid in Greece, and they adopted the Greek laws and cuftoms. But it is to be remembered, that comedy was in their age a new entertainment in Rome, and that they were contented with the praife of tranflating Me-

nander and other comic writers of Greece. In poſterior times the Romans had the " Comœdia Togata," or what was founded on their own manners, as well as the " Comœdia Palliata," which was taken from the Greeks.

There are two kinds of comedy, that of character, and that of intrigue. In the laſt, the plot or action of the play is the principal object. In the firſt, the diſplay of a peculiar character is the chief point; and to this the action is ſubordinate. The French abound moſt in comedies of character. Such are the capital pieces of Moliere. The Engliſh have inclined more to comedies of intrigue. Such are the plays of Congreve; and in general there is more ſtory, action, and buſtle in Engliſh, than in French comedy.

The perfection of comedy is to be found in a proper mixture of theſe two kinds. Mere converſation without an intereſting ſtory is inſipid. There ſhould ever be ſo much intrigue, as to excite both fears and wiſhes. The incidents ſhould be ſtriking, and afford a proper field for the exhibition of character. The piece however ſhould not be overcharged with intrigue; for this would be to convert a comedy into a novel.

With reſpect to characters it is a common error of comic writers, to carry them much beyond real life; indeed it is very difficult to hit the preciſe point, where wit ends, and buffoonery begins. The comedian may exaggerate; but good ſenſe muſt teach him where to ſtop.

In comedy there ought to be a clear diſtinction in characters. The contraſt of characters however by pairs, and by oppoſites, is too theatrical and affected. It is the perfection of art to conceal art. A maſterly

writer gives us his characters, distinguished rather by such shades of diversity, as are commonly found in society, than marked by such oppositions, as are seldom brought into actual contrast in any of the circumstances of life.

The style of comedy ought to be pure, lively, and elegant, generally imitating the tone of polite conversation, and never descending into gross expressions. Rhyme is not suitable to comic composition; for what has poetry to do with the conversation of men in common life? The current of the dialogue should be easy without pertness, and genteel without flippancy. The wit should never be studied, nor unseasonable.

ANCIENT COMEDY.

THE ancient comedy was an avowed satire against particular persons, brought upon the stage by name. Such are the plays of Aristophanes; and compositions of so singular a nature illustrate well the turbulent and licentious state of Athens. The most illustrious personages, generals and magistrates, were then made the subjects of comedy. Vivacity, satire, and buffoonery are the characteristics of Aristophanes. On many occasions he displays genius and force; but his performances give us no high idea of the attic taste for wit in his age. His ridicule is extravagant; his wit farcical; his personal raillery cruel and biting; and his obscenity intolerable.

Soon after the age of Aristophanes the liberty of attacking persons by name on the stage was prohibit-

ed by law. The middle comedy then took its rise. Living persons were still attacked, but under fictitious names. Of these pieces we have no remains. They were succeeded by the new comedy; when it became as it is now, the business of the stage to exhibit manners and characters, but not those of particular persons. The author of this kind, most celebrated among the Greeks, was Menander; but his writings are perished.

Of the new comedy of the ancients, the only remains are the plays of Plautus and Terence. The first is eminent for the *vis comica*, and for an expressive phraseology. He bears, however, many marks of the rudeness of the dramatic art in his time. He has too much low wit and scurrility; and is by far too quaint and full of conceit. He has more variety and more force than Terence; and his characters are strongly marked, though sometimes coarsely.

Terence is polished, delicate, and elegant. His style is a model of the most pure and graceful latinity. His dialogue is always correct and decent; and his relations have a picturesque and beautiful simplicity. His morality is in general unexceptionable; his situations are interesting; and many of his sentiments touch the heart. He may be considered as the founder of serious comedy. In sprightliness and strength he is deficient. There is a sameness in his characters and plots; and he is said to have been inferior to Menander, whom he copied. To form a perfect comic author, the spirit and fire of Plautus ought to be united with the grace and correctness of Terence.

SPANISH COMEDY.

THE moſt prominent object in modern comedy is the Spaniſh theatre. The chief comedians of Spain are Lopez de Vega, Guillen and Calderon. The firſt, who is the moſt famous of them, wrote above a thouſand plays; and was infinitely more irregular than Shakeſpeare. He totally diſregarded the three unities, and every eſtabliſhed rule of dramatic writing. One play often includes many years, and even the whole life of a man. The ſcene, during the firſt act is in Spain; the next in Italy; and the third in Africa. His plays are chiefly hiſtorical, and are a mixture of heroic ſpeeches, ſerious incidents, war and ſlaughter, ridicule and buffoonery. He jumbles together chriſtianity and paganiſm, virtues and vices, angels and gods. Notwithſtanding his faults, he poſſeſſed genius, and great force of imagination. Many of his characters are well painted; many of his ſituations are happy; and from the ſource of his rich invention dramatic writers of other nations have frequently drawn their materials. He was conſcious himſelf of his extreme irregularities, and apologized for them from the prevailing taſte of his countrymen.

FRENCH COMEDY.

THE comic theatre of France is allowed to be correct, chaſte, and decent. The comic author, in whom the French glory moſt, is Moliere. In the judgment of French critics he has nearly reached the ſummit of perfection in his art. Nor is this the deciſion of mere partiality. Moliere is the ſatiriſt only of vice and folly. His characters were peculiar to his own times; and in general his ridicule was juſtly directed. His comic powers were great; and his pleaſantry is always innocent. His Miſanthrope and Tartuffe are in verſe, and conſtitute a kind of dignified comedy, in which vice is expoſed in the ſtyle of elegant and polite ſatire. In his proſe comedies there is a profuſion of ridicule; but the poet never gives alarm to modeſty, nor caſts contempt on virtue. With theſe high qualities however conſiderable defects are mingled. In unravelling his plots he is unhappy; as this is frequently brought on with too little preparation, and in an improbable manner. In his verſe comedies he is not always ſufficiently intereſting; and he is too full of long ſpeeches. In his riſible pieces in proſe he is too farcical. But upon the whole it may be affirmed, that few writers ever attained ſo perfectly the true end of comedy. His Tartuffe and Avare are his two capital productions.

ENGLISH COMEDY.

FROM the Engliſh theatre is naturally expected a great variety of original characters in comedy, and bolder ſtrokes of wit and humour than from any other modern ſtage. Humour is in ſome degree peculiar to England. The freedom of the government, and the unreſtrained liberty of Engliſh manners, are favourable to humour and ſingularity of character. In France the influence of a deſpotic court ſpreads uniformity over the nation. Hence comedy has a more amplified and a freer vein in Britain than in France. But it is to be regretted, that the comic ſpirit of Britain is often diſgraced by indecency and licentiouſneſs.

The firſt age, however, of Engliſh comedy was not infected by this ſpirit. The plays of Shakeſpeare and Ben Johnſon have no immoral tendency. The comedies of the former diſplay a ſtrong, creative genius; but are irregular in conduct. They are ſingularly rich in characters and manners; but often deſcend to pleaſe the mob. Johnſon is more regular, but ſtiff and pedantic; though not void of dramatic genius. Much fancy and invention, and many fine paſſages, are found in the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher. But in general they abound in romantic incidents, unnatural characters, and coarſe alluſions.

Change of manners has rendered the comedies of the laſt age obſolete. For it is the exhibition of prevailing modes and characters, that gives a charm to comedy. Thus Plautus was antiquated to the Ro-

mans in the days of Auguſtus. But to the honour of Shakeſpeare his Falſtaff is ſtill admired, and his Merry Wives of Windſor read with pleaſure.

After the reſtoration of Charles II. the licentiouſneſs, which polluted the court and nation, ſeized upon comedy. The rake became the predominant character. Ridicule was thrown upon chaſtity and ſobriety. At the end of the play indeed the rake becomes a ſober man; but through the performance he is a fine gentleman, and exhibits a picture of the pleaſurable enjoyments of life. This ſpirit of comedy had the worſt effect on youth of both ſexes, and continued to the days of George II.

In the comedies of Dryden there are many ſtrokes of genius; but he is haſty and careleſs. As his object was to pleaſe, he followed the current of the times, and gave way to indelicacy and licentiouſneſs. His indecency was at times ſo groſs, as to occaſion a prohibition of his plays on the ſtage.

After Dryden flouriſhed Cibber, Vanburgh, Farquhar, and Congreve. Cibber has ſprightlineſs and a pert vivacity; but his incidents are ſo forced and unnatural, that his performances have all ſunk into obſcurity, excepting the Careleſs Huſband and The Provoked Huſband. Of theſe the firſt is remarkable for the eaſy politeneſs of the dialogue; and it is tolerably moral in its conduct. The latter, in which Cibber was aſſiſted by Vanburgh, is perhaps the beſt comedy in the Engliſh language; and even to this it may be objected, that it has a double plot. Its characters however are natural, and it abounds with fine painting and happy ſtrokes of humour.

Wit, ſpirit, and eaſe, characterize Sir John Vanburgh; but he is the moſt indelicate and immoral of all our comedians. Congreve undoubtedly poſſeſſed genius. He is witty and ſparkling, and full of character and action. Indeed he overflows with wit; for it is often introduced unſeaſonably; and in general there is too much of it for well-bred converſation. Farquhar is a light and gay writer; leſs correct and leſs brilliant than Congreve; but he has more eaſe, and much of the *vis comica*. Like Congreve he is licentious; and modeſty muſt turn from them both with abhorrence. The French boaſt with juſtice of the ſuperior decency of their ſtage, and ſpeak of the Engliſh theatre with aſtoniſhment. Their philoſophical writers aſcribe the profligate manners of London to the indelicacy and corruption of Engliſh comedy.

Of late years a ſenſible reformation has taken place in Engliſh comedy. Our writers of comedy now appear aſhamed of the indecency of their predeceſſors. They may be inferior to Farquhar and Congreve in ſpirit, eaſe and wit; but they have the merit of being far more innocent and moral.

To the French ſtage we are much indebted for this reformation. The introduction within a few years of a graver comedy in France, called the ſerious or tender comedy, has attracted the attention and approbation of our writers. Gaiety and ridicule are not excluded from this ſpecies of comedy; but it lays the chief ſtreſs on tender and intereſting ſituations. It is ſentimental, and touches the heart. It pleaſes not ſo much by the laughter it excites, as by the tears of affection and joy which it draws forth.

This form of comedy was oppoſed in France, as an unjuſtifiable innovation. It was objected by critics, that it was not founded on laughter and ridicule; but it is not neceſſary that all comedies be formed on one preciſe model. Some may be gay; ſome ſerious; and ſome may partake of both qualities. Serious and tender comedy has no right to exclude gaiety and ridicule from the ſtage. There are materials for both; and the ſtage is richer for the innovation. In general it may be conſidered as a mark of increaſing politeneſs and refinement, when thoſe theatrical exhibitions become faſhionable, which are free from indelicate ſentiment and an immoral tendency.

FINIS.

Born: Day Ruf

Edmund Ruffin